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If Not a United Church—What?

THE CHRISTIAN UNITY HANDBOOK SERIES

Edited by Peter Ainslie, D.D.

Announcement

There is a wide-spread weariness of the present forms of religion as expressed by all the bodies of Christendom. Consequently we are to look for new paths whereby the will of God and the soul hunger may be satisfied. As a contribution to this end the Christian Unity Handbook Series offers for heart-searching consideration the proposals for a united Christendom, discussed without reservation in brief handbooks by those of various communions and of various nationalities who have given study to this whole field of doing the will of God for this generation and satisfying the present day soul hunger, believing that in the passion for the unity of Christendom is to be found a definite step toward the solution.

The next volume following this will be by his Grace, the Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom.

THE CHRISTIAN UNITY HANDBOOK SERIES
VOLUME I.

If Not a United Church—What?

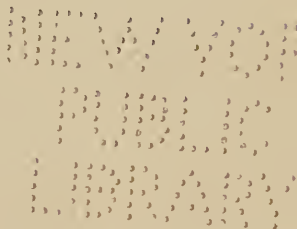
The Reinicker Lectures at the
Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia

By



PETER AINSLIE

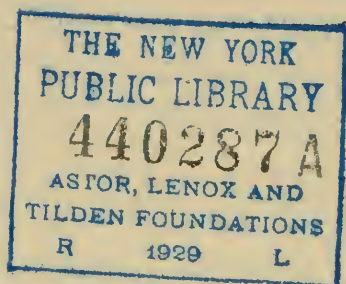
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Author of "Christ or Napoleon—Which?" etc.



NEW YORK
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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New York : 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago : 17 North Wabash Ave.
London : 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh : 75 Princes Street

Foreword

THESE lectures were first delivered from notes at the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia on the Reinicker Foundation. They have been delivered on other occasions and each time additions have been made to them. After a longer time than I anticipated I undertook writing them out as they appear in this volume. Necessarily there are omissions and additions, but the original outlines are preserved. They aspire to be only a voice—another voice—amid the many that are being sounded forth for the unity of the Church of Christ.

P. A.

Baltimore, Md.

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I

CHRISTIAN UNITY: ITS NECESSITY

THE greatest necessity of modern times is the unity of the Church of Christ. No other issue exceeds it in importance. Nevertheless we have been so accustomed to think in terms of a divided Christendom that we find ourselves to-day not only still involved in the multiplicity of divisions, but facing the difficult task both of finding a way to think in terms of a united Christendom and of being Christian to all other Christians. Next in importance to the coming of Christianity into the world is the attaining of Christianity unto unity for the completion of the work of Christ on earth. If in the first period love to and faith in God were established, in the second period love of and faith in one's fellows must likewise be established else all expressions of the two great commandments are both inharmonious and false.¹ The integrity and glory of Christ are so involved by a divided Christendom that the Church is under necessity of shifting her base in seeking to preserve her honour, now so divided, obscured and defiled, and

¹ 1 John 4:20.

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of finding a base upon which the honour of Christ is made primary. The Church has discovered other sins and scourged them from her portals. We of this day must not be afraid to face the sin of a divided Christendom and express repentance in our change of mind toward the will of God in the unity of His Church, for which Christ prayed and of which the Apostle Paul urged that all should

“attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”¹

It is the challenge of the hour—the challenge to each of us who has been enrolled in the fellowship of Christ. I confess myself only a student of this delicate and vital problem. I am trying to find the way by conference with others of other communions; by prayer for myself and others, not that others may come to my point of view or I to theirs, but that both may find the truth; also by working side by side with others as far as it is possible in the present state of division; and by trying to think the thoughts of Christ, Who Himself says,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”²

I. An awakened conscience is the first step toward a united Christendom. It has been so long since division became an accepted condition

¹ Eph. 4: 13.

² John 14: 6.

of Christendom, and these divisions have been so stoutly defended either in the rights of freedom or in the condemnation of error, that we must not think harshly of those who dissent from us in our appeals for the unity of the Church. Equally important with the most vital facts of Christendom is the great fact of brotherhood. Consequently we cannot take the first step toward each other except it be in the attitude and patience of brothers irrespective of theological dogmas or decrees of ecclesiastical councils.

Because the Church is a divine institution it must necessarily contain the elements of unity. John Ruskin, in his "Ethics of the Dust," says,

"A pure and holy state of anything is that in which all its parts are helpful or consistent. The highest and the first law of the universe, and the other name of life is therefore 'help.' The other name of death is 'separation.' Government and coöperation are in all things, and eternally, the laws of life. Anarchy and competition, eternally, and in all things, the laws of death."

There is need of neither argument nor witnesses to sustain this affirmation. The whole universe declares it. Order, unity and harmony are in all that God has made. You may look through the telescope into the clear midnight sky or through a microscope into the perfumed heart of a flower or into the delicately formed body of an insect, and everywhere are order, unity and harmony. Discord and defect indicate the presence of a foreign element. The normal condition of the

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Church is unity. Disunion is immorality. If we find something that is pushing us away from our fellows, let us not deceive ourselves by thinking that that something is religion. The fact is that that something is irreligion, for religion fundamentally is the bond of kinship and love which binds us together and to God.

Because of our inherent human friendliness only a united Christianity can function for our greatest need. It cannot be denied that natural sociability and mutual advantage impel men to unity. One of the purposes of Christianity is to remove the barriers of discord and unfriendliness, making it easy, permanent and spiritual for men to come into a fellowship for which they were created and out of which they are to develop into the highest of earth's products. Instead the divisive condition of Christianity is defeating the purpose of its existence, denying a principle that is as fundamental as the belief that Jesus is the Christ and making the impression that schism is the order of heaven, which every one knows is not true from his own natural desire for friendship.

In a certain town there are four congregations of Christians with their Church buildings within two blocks of each other. All the lines of trade in that town have formed coöperative organizations for mutual advantage. The overshadowing divisive thing there is in the matter of religion. The members of these four congregations meet on a common level in business and at social func-

tions, but on reverting to Christianity all four are aloof in their pride of history, tradition or Scriptural interpretation. No man can say that such a condition was the purpose of Christ in founding His Church, nor the will of Christ in maintaining His Church, unless his Christ is a creation of his own mind for his particular party, as long ago the ancients conceived their gods to suit their particular notions. Then both are idolaters—the former no less an idolater than the latter, only his phrasings are of the Christian complexion and therefore more repugnant to brotherhood and immortality. Frequently the opinions of these Church people have been labeled as convictions. Perhaps they would die for them and many doubtless have done that, but such martyrdoms add neither to the sanctity of the person nor the cause. When one is able to classify in his own thinking which are convictions and which are opinions he forthwith needs to revise the former and give liberty to the latter, if he desire adjustment to the spiritual necessities of the times. Convictions cannot be compromised with the idea of permanency, but they can be revised, and every life that is growing toward God is revising its convictions constantly. No one is looking for the unity of Christendom to come by the way of compromised convictions, but the tragedy of division is that it is maintained by compromise. There is not a body in all Christendom—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican or Protestant—but has by its very existence compro-

mised the Spirit of Christ. Now the question is whether we are willing to guard our opinions about this, that and the other to the last ditch of our failure and continue compromising the Spirit of Christ by division in the Church, or whether we are willing to revise our convictions, surrendering to the leadership of the Spirit and thereby finding the way to the triumph of the will of God among men.

There stand the friendly citizens of that little town, however, separated by apparently impassable barriers, many bitterly sectarian, with perhaps not more than a tenth of its Church membership (and let us wish it were less) that can intelligently state why they are separated from other Christians, and those statements would have to do with such secondary matters regarding the world's redemption that in a few centuries from now it will be a question as to which age of our semi-civilization the religious views and practices of the twentieth century will be classified. The condition of this certain town can be duplicated in every city, town and rural community around the globe from Damascus in Syria, with its six different kinds of Christians, to the Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia, with its two little Church buildings nestling in the valley of the Alleghanies and affirming that the Church of Christ is divided. It is a world-wide plague. The policy is false and therefore the front which the Church presents is false. Thus millions are hostile to the Church. They see no

advantage in its fellowship and are willing to go alone without the Church. Which is to be pitied most—the Church which has lost its way in sectarian entanglements and therefore has become a hindrance to the will of God among men, annihilating itself by contradictory beliefs; or the man who, in consequence of this condition, seeks alone for the paths of fraternity, equality and eternal life?

Because of the superficiality of modern Christianity there must come a Christian agnosticism in the face of ultimate problems, which we can never solve, to drive us away from our cheap explanations, until the whole Church finds a vital faith in God and the power of a crucified love—these appear to be the paths extending before us, exceeding in importance every other field of research and presenting a task exceeding in greatness anything ever undertaken before by man. We hear much about the undeveloped resources of electricity, mineralogy and other sciences, but the vastest undeveloped resources are in the domain of the uncharted and unsounded depths of the spirituality of God and the human soul. We have exploited to the limit hair-splitting definitions of all terms in the realm of theology and invented new terms to satisfy our philosophical roving. Upon these definitions have been established most of the hard and fast divisions of Christendom. While it is true that this practice is not so common now as formerly, nevertheless the results of this practice are still evident when

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you read the long list of the religious statistics sent out by the United States Census Bureau. Is this the occasion when it is said,

“He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh;
And the Lord will have them in derision”?¹

This condition leads each of the many Christian communions to believe that it is a law unto itself—that because it is separated from others it is accountable only to those with whom it is separated—thereby dwarfing love, blighting brotherhood and shattering the spiritual universe into as many parts as there are parties and each building up itself at the expense of pulling down what Jesus came to establish. The time has come for new discoveries. Action is already overdue.

II. The present day crises demand a united Church. In the glare of the war we have been able to see conditions as perhaps many of us have not seen before. Antecedents present quite as interesting a study as consequences, but we are not so much concerned about where to put the fault of division as to how to extricate ourselves from denominational entanglements in order to go upon our task in a world-wide witnessing of Christ. Present conditions block the way.

The American Church presents serious difficulties, especially in the rural districts. According to governmental statistics only forty-three per cent. of the rural Churches in the United States are growing, eighteen per cent. are stationary and

¹ Psalm 2:4.

thirty-nine per cent. are losing. But if there were no such alarming figures the issue would still be the same, for the necessary conditions of a divided Church in a rural community are disheartening to the development of spirituality, irrespective of numerical growth. These conditions may be classed under three heads: (1) Duplication of effort, (2) bad financiering, and (3) magnifying non-essentials, all of which contribute to the weakening of vital Christianity. If all of these conditions do not exist one would be enough to seriously involve the teachings of Christ.

In a certain town of nearly eight hundred people there are five Churches, each minister working independently as though he were the only minister in that community and duplicating the work of the other four ministers, thereby presenting an ugly and unspiritual front. In financiering those five little Churches five home missionary boards are sending experienced money raisers throughout the country to raise money to support these five ministers, for the good name of the denomination is at stake. But with what the missionary boards contribute in addition to what each little congregation can raise there is a constant deficit, so each congregation resorts to illicit methods of raising money by having fairs, suppers, etc., strangling at the outset the finest possibilities of spirituality which is vitally dependent upon giving. One or two of these little Churches will after while gain sufficiently in members to be independent of the home missionary board, which

is hailed as a denominational triumph. In course of time all five may become independent of the missionary boards. But this scandalous policy is still there, only better established. With all these frantic efforts the average salary of an American minister is \$636.00—little more than the average salary of the untrained blacksmith, which is \$537.00, little less than the average salary of the untrained stableman, which is \$689.00, and little more than the average salary of the untrained carpenter, which is \$603.00.¹ The small salary weakens the minister's best efforts in caring for the spiritual needs of the congregation by the necessary concern for his own family.

But more. Each of these ministers must emphasize his denominational peculiarities, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, such as customs regarding the ordinances, Church polity, public worship, etc., as though the salvation of the world hung upon these things, and each saying so loud to the other, "a more excellent way show I unto you," that the way to Christ is obscured in the controversies of the followers of Christ. The result of all this is that non-essentials are given primary place and vital Christianity is made secondary. In many instances it would be regarded as a calamity, especially if he were a liberal contributor or holding a high social position, for one of the members in one of these little Churches to transfer his membership to another of these Churches because of a change in theological

¹ These figures are based on the salaries of 1914; to-day the salaries of the latter have doubled and tripled.

viewpoint or for matrimonial or social reasons, and it would perhaps cause more talk, and longer talk, in this little town than if a sinner had been won to Christ. Whatever else may happen each denomination must hold its own! I am told that Abraham Lincoln became deeply concerned in the matter of religion some years after his marriage. On informing his wife that his choice of a Church was other than her own, Mrs. Lincoln cried all night. Next morning Mr. Lincoln informed his wife that rather than cause her any distress he would never identify himself with any of the Churches, but would maintain his faith in Christ as long as he lived. Whether this incident in Mr. Lincoln's life is true or not, his subsequent history sustains it and there are multitudes of instances that parallel it in nearly every community where Christianity is known. The whole programme is unfair both to Christ and the people.

The city Church is not yet as seriously involved as the rural Church, but it is approaching it and the next decade may find it there, struggling for existence against most contrary odds. The larger a city the more difficult it is to get an audience. In New York some of the most consecrated and brilliant men in the American pulpit never preach to full houses. Indeed it is an exception which calls forth comment for a Church in any of the large American cities to have a full house at the evening service. Most of the large American cities are becoming as heathen as India

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or China. The midweek services are being forsaken in most of the city Churches and thirty to sixty is being accepted as a satisfactory attendance under present conditions, where the service is not abandoned entirely. All sorts of schemes of prizes and rivalries are being put forth in the Sunday-school rather than the charm of the knowledge of the glory of God to increase or even hold the attendance. The public school does not have to resort to such a policy. In comparing the two one appears artificial and the other real. Around public squares and on leading avenues are found a great variety of Churches with every possible theological interpretation—overcrowding and overlapping—while in the poorer sections there is a scarcity of Churches. Pride of denomination has too frequently prevailed over concern for the common good. In all these wealthy residential centers of the city where great Church buildings are crowded against each other in the attempt, through pride of denomination, to outdo the other, some bold hand must some day write in letters of fire across every such Church door—"Ichabod."

The whole world has awakened to the needs and possibilities of intellectual development as never before in its history. Knowledge is power and the intellect is given us for development, but this intellectual development must come under the power of Christianity. Not to speak of America and Europe, but India is dotted with colleges and universities. China is putting forth a great edu-

cational system, having 130,000 schools with an attendance of approximately 4,500,000. She already has six universities and is now planning to locate a university in the capital of every province. The Imperial University of Japan is one of the best educational institutions in the world. In South America, Africa and the islands of the sea educational institutions hold places of leadership. All over the world there are constant adjustments of national educational systems in order to reach every child for its intellectual development, but education is not merely intellectual development. Were it that alone it would be the most dangerous force in a nation. So long as religion receives a secondary place in education, if a place at all, we must expect intellectual development to be a power for evil as it was in Greece and Rome. When they were highest in intellectual development they were lowest in morals. Italy was never worse than in the days of the Renaissance. By the side of the revival of classic learning arose vices that disgraced mankind. Education is, as Nicholas Murray Butler says in his "Meaning of Education," "a gradual adjustment to the spiritual possessions of the race." The chief of detectives of Baltimore said to me that where it took one detective to catch a crook forty years ago, it now takes ten, which is due to superior intellectual development of the average young man over former years. In one department of criminality in the United States—that of fraudulent use of the mails—of

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the 522 who were convicted, 106 were college graduates and more than a dozen were the valedictorians in their classes.

Education is not expressed in terms of intelligence, but in terms of conduct and character. The function which education has to discharge is, according to Herbert Spencer, "to prepare us for complete living." That cannot be done without Christianizing all modern education. Above all the teachers of ancient and modern times is Jesus Christ, Whom the multitudes in the days of His flesh called "Teacher" and for Whom the multitudes still hunger. But His principles of education cannot function through a secular or denominational system. One is as disastrous as the other. Because of the multiplicity of divisions in Christianity the directors of secular systems have to be cautious sometimes to the extent of exclusion of divided Christianity, however friendly to Christ they may be. Therefore Christ is held back from the place as teacher by the divisions of His Church. Because no denomination, Roman Catholic or Protestant, possesses the whole truth of Christianity, its systems are defective, more or less, especially in emphasizing their denominational peculiarities over the common good. We are facing the gigantic problem of Christianizing the education of the world and it must be frankly acknowledged that a divided Church cannot function in such a task. Therefore the secular and the denominational schools must come under the power of a united

Christendom if Jesus is to have His rightful place as the world's teacher.

The ethnic religions are awakening to Christianity's challenge of the right of supremacy to teach. Both Buddhism and Islam are powerful religions. Both are missionary in their policies. Islam is planning to capture Africa by a chain of mission stations across the continent and already more than a dozen Buddhist temples dot the Pacific coast of America. Lesser religions like Shintoism and Confucianism are likewise proudly claiming their divine right to teach. Buddhism and Islam in particular are inaugurating systems whereby whole nations may be held to their faiths. They are training their children on the models of Christian Sunday-schools. On the occasion of the coronation of the Emperor of Japan in 1915, 800 Buddhist Sunday-schools were started with an enrollment of 120,000 children and these figures have increased every month. They have their Mothers' Day, Children's Day, Young Men's Buddhist Association, and in their public worship they sing our Christian hymns, substituting Buddha for Jesus. They have their universities and some of the best educated men in the world are in these ethnic religions. With all their prestige and traditions it is nevertheless being generally acknowledged that the ethnic religions are losing hold on the people, but it is pertinent to ask, Is a divided Christianity prepared to win them to Christ? My answer is in the last report of the religious census of the stu-

dent body of the Imperial University of Japan. Of the nearly 5,000 students, 6 are Confucianists, 12 Shintoists, 60 Christians, 300 Buddhists, 1,500 Atheists, and 3,000 Agnostics!¹ The present day crises, whether dealing with the local Church or world education or the ethnic religions or an unbelieving world, is a challenge for the unity of Christendom.

III. The vindication of Christianity is dependent upon a united Church. The advance of Christianity through the world has been marked by a succession of crises in its encounter with various forms of unbelief. Out of these struggles Christianity has been vindicated. Unity is necessary for its vindication in the present crises.

Christianity arose amid conflicts and struggles. Its first encounter was with Judaism. It found its vindication in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and the four Gospels are the product of that conflict. As it pushed its way into the Roman Empire paganism yielded its decaying faith to the bold missionary programme of the early Church, leaving the Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament, along with the apologies of Justin, Athenagoras and others as the evidence of its right to be heard. Then it encountered pagan philosophy. Lucian treated its advance with a compassionate smile of unbelief, Celsus with critical ability denied the supernatural will, and Porphyry, perhaps the bitterest opponent Christianity ever had, combined a brilliancy and

¹ "Unity and Missions," by Arthur Judson Brown.

sagacity that made him a critic of extraordinary ability. Others had attempted to check the advance of Christianity; he sought to abolish it. But equally great minds arose in the persons of Tertullian, Clement, Origen, Eusebius and Augustine, leaving us their apologetic writings with the witness of the martyrs. Then came the conflict with barbarism, which swept with destruction over the decaying Roman Empire, but the Christian schools of the Middle Ages with their great missionary programmes furnished the evidences of Christianity's vindication. So with its conflict with Islam. A most treacherous foe was modern rationalism, speaking sometimes in terms of the Italian naturalists, or in terms of the English deists, or in terms of the French atheists, or in terms of the German pantheists, but great souls like Bentley, Berkeley, Butler and Neander spoke for the truth until under wider skies Christianity's vindication was again evidenced. But no severer conflict has ever been encountered than that of these times. Whether it is more severe or less severe is immaterial, only according to the logic of conflicts this would be the most severe. Be that as it may, Christianity's vindication in these times lies by the way of a united Church.

That we may focus our vision aright and see through the storm of conflict we must go back to the days when Jesus was in the flesh and look with Him through the dissolving mist of years. I cite a few quotations from Him. Jesus saw the place of His own person in the foundation of His

Church. In conversation with His disciples He says,

“Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”¹

The Church cannot perish out of the earth any more than God can perish out of the universe. But that is no reason for maintaining divisions in the Church, bringing it to the brink of ruin. A house divided against itself cannot stand, although in their separate capacities the members of the household may go on living separately without speaking to each other, conducting their social and business affairs with some kind of satisfaction to themselves and outwardly appearing to be getting along well. Jesus taught that such a house has fallen, that such a course is wrong, and He applied the principle to the Church. The Church is divided against itself and is therefore a fallen institution; and more, what nation to-day hesitates to smite with war a sister nation because of the presence there of the Church? The various divisions—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and the multiplicity of Protestants—are proudly conducting their affairs as though each were the whole Church. However satisfactory the annual reports may be it is a policy that is doomed to failure. Not even the Church of Christ can survive such a departure unless there come a spiritual awakening whereby the broken threads of Chris-

¹ Matt. 16: 18.

tian brotherhood shall be bound into a permanent unity in Christ.

The Church has its faults, to be sure, and we should not dodge in denying them. Its members through all the ages have been of like passions with ourselves. Some—and this number has been far too large—have loved preëminence, thereby being more properly classed as the disciples of the self-seeking Diotrophes than of the self-sacrificing Jesus, but I dare say that there has not been a communion in Christendom where there could not be found examples of genuine piety and true devotion.

Every century from the first to the twentieth is rich in its testimony like that given by Paul, Peter, John, Clement and Polycarp of the first century, Irenæus and the liturgy of the Greek Church of the second and third, Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrose and Basil of the fourth, Gelasius of the fifth, Gregory of the sixth, Bede of the seventh, Alcuin of the eighth, Alfred of the ninth, Æthelwold of the tenth, Anselm of the eleventh, Dan Jeremy of the twelfth, Thomas Aquinas and John Tauler of the thirteenth, Thomas à Kempis of the fourteenth, Savonarola, Erasmus, Luther and Melancthon of the fifteenth, Bishop Andrewes, John Knox, Francis Bacon and Lady Jane Grey of the sixteenth, Jeremy Taylor, Matthew Henry, Fénelon, Sir Matthew Hale, Bishop Wilson and Leighton of the seventeenth, John Wesley, Samuel Johnson, Henry Martyn, Edward Bickersteth, Chalmers,

Channing and Heber of the eighteenth and Henry Alford, George Dawson, Boyd Carpenter, Cardinal Newman, Pusey, Maurice, Robert Collyer, James Martineau, Canon Liddon, Christina G. Rossetti, and crowds of others of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I have found in reading the prayers of these that I have been better able to bring my petitions before God than in my own feeble language. There was Francis of Assisi in mendicant robes with crucifix and rosary, and years later came John Woolman with no outward signs or ordinances, but both of these were followers of Christ and ten thousand others, showing us how full God's hand is of sanctified jewels. Evil can mar the Church, but evil cannot absolutely prevail over it.

Discord was a part of the picture that Jesus left us. That memorable conversation on the Mount of Olives furnishes the second quotation from Him. He says,

“Then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another.”¹

If the tense of this sentence were changed from the future to the past, so as to make it read “Then did many stumble, and did deliver up one another, and did hate one another,” it would be an authentic sentence for any volume of Church history. Jesus not only knew God, but He knew man. He saw the fermentations in the material out of which He would make His Church. It was the imperfect man that He was dealing with

¹ Matt. 24: 10.

and He knew that, but the goal of the imperfect was growth into perfection—"a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it would be holy and without blemish."¹ We must face the fact that the Church has stumbled through the centuries and is still stumbling, that brother has delivered up brother to torture and death and that brother has hated brother, but the time is at hand when the Church needs to stumble less, to teach brothers to defend brothers and to exemplify love to all irrespective of denomination, nationality, race or class. Once it was said, "See how those Christians love each other!" Years after it was just as appropriate to say, "See how those Christians hate each other!" While conditions have greatly improved, there could not be found a person to-day so false as to say, "See how the Roman Catholics and Protestants love each other!" Although the cleavages between the various Protestant communions are not nearly so wide as in former years, and we rejoice in this, I think any one would doubt, however, that the time has come when love is the characteristic procedure between all the Protestant divisions. Then we have some distance to go yet in the unity of the Protestant household alone, for love is the badge of Christian discipleship. Any other road leads us away from the goal. Only on that road can we walk so long as we are seeking for the unity of the Church of Christ.

¹ Eph. 5:27.

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In His high-priestly prayer Jesus prayed for the unity of His Church in words trembling with tears, which furnish the third quotation from Him. He says,

“Holy Father . . . I pray . . . that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.”¹

This prayer still hovers over the Church like the pillar of cloud over the tabernacle. It is both an appeal and a method—an appeal to God with ourselves as witnesses and the method of prayer as the channel of our approach to each other. The winning of this world to Christ is a big task for a united Church—the biggest task ever undertaken by mortal man. It cannot be done by a divided Church. There is no more idle tale than to talk of the divided Church’s winning this world. Victory can come only through unity of forces. After nearly two thousand years where is the nation the majority of whose citizens are definitely in fellowship with the Church or Churches of that nation?

The world to-day is confused, badly confused. Its confusion is largely due to the confused Church, whose leadership is lost in the multiplicity of divisions. When God called for a prophet centuries ago the prompt response was “Here am I,” but in these days of confusion the stammering response comes, “Where are we?” Where indeed are we and what can we do?

¹ John 17:21.

There can be no more serious issue than that which we face to-day. The greatest need of the hour is the vindication of Christianity. For more than a thousand years the Church historians are one in their opinion that the lethargy of the Church in the sixth century afforded an opportunity for the rise of Mohammedanism and its establishment on three continents. In the years to come the charge will be laid against the Church of this day that because of its divisions, and therefore its unspiritual attitudes, the whole world is under the domination of social and economic wrongs, culminating in the disastrous war of 1914, which was one of the most brutal wars of all history, and which broke forth among the most Christian nations, demonstrating the power of evil and the present weakness of the Church. At the crisis of 1914 organized Christianity stood helpless in every nation on the globe and was powerless to preserve the peace of the world. Surely division has its fruit. Whatever may be the immediate causes, the remote cause must be laid at the door of the Church. Sins of omission are as far-reaching in their consequences as sins of commission. No division of Christendom can escape this responsibility. We are all involved, and so seriously involved that these times challenge the Church, not only for a restatement of faith, but both for the readjustment of our methods and for the manifestation of a new spirit, if we would be a factor at all in contributing to the reconstruction of the world.

In His prayer Jesus has shown that the secret of the world conquest lies in a united Church—not merely a coöperation of denominations nor a federation of denominations, however good these may be, and they are good as far as they go, but Jesus directed us to go beyond these into a union of believers closer than that between brothers of the same parents—a union like that between Himself and the Father. There are possibilities in Christian life far, very far beyond the achievements of these times. Christ came to save a world and the world is not saved. Its tragedies succeed each other as though the Church bore no witness against their iniquities.

Jesus looks calmly beyond the turmoil of strife and schism. In the fourth quotation He says,

“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.”¹

As the Good Shepherd was the beautiful symbol in the early Church, the religion of the Good Shepherd must be the religion of conquest in the latter days. The most ancient Christian gems, perhaps the very first gems of the early Church, set forth the conception of the spirit of Christianity in this favourite figure. Says Canon Farrar, “They looked on that figure, and it conveyed to them all they wanted.”² Theologians and Church councils must fade as the Good Shepherd

¹ John 10:16.

² “The Life of Christ as Represented in Art,” by Frederic W. Farrar.

comes again into view. Hear Him say, "I that speak unto thee am He." The Good Shepherd is not here "to repel, but to include; not to condemn, but to save." His Church must rise to His Spirit and include in her fellowship all who accept Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God and our Lord and Saviour. These limitations are sublimely divine. All others savour of sectarianism.

Of the necessities that face us it may be said with confidence that it is not necessary that there should be separate schools for each denomination and separate journals for each denomination. Consciously or unconsciously they deal with parts at the exclusion of the whole and consequently are unfair. Even though the denominational school does not teach denominational tenets both its background and atmosphere are denominational. So of the denominational journal. In reporting the work of Christ in a city, for instance, it reports only the work of that denomination, as though the only work of Christ in that city was that which is being done by that particular denomination. These are not the necessities of Christianity, but both these schools and these journals are necessary for the perpetuation of division in the Church of Christ. They are the stilts upon which a divided Church walks and in spite of these the Church has survived. The great necessity of these times, however, is that we should have both schools and journals distinctively Christian, including the

thought and experience of the whole Church for the winning of the whole world to Jesus Christ. It is not that these schools and journals should be abolished except where they may be crowded in some centers, but all should be interdenominationalized by bringing persons of other communions on the board of trustees, in the faculty and among the editorial force.

The times are serious. Upon our consciences must be written with a pen of iron that Christian unity is necessary because without it there can be neither a spiritual Church nor a world-victorious Church; or to phrase it in other words, in order that the Church be spiritual and world-victorious it is necessary that it

“attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”¹

The necessities that lie before us are not in forms, ceremonies and declarations. You may have these abundantly or meagerly and be with or without genuine religion. Neither because a thing is ancient nor because it is modern is it to be a criterion of truth. The test must be found in awakening that true nobility of soul that sets a man in the proper attitude to God and to his fellows. Hence the necessary steps toward the unity of the Church of Christ may find satisfactory expression in the following propositions:

1. A Christian must be free for the real de-

¹ Eph. 4 : 13.

velopment of his spiritual nature, free from the bondage of sin and free to live the life of the Spirit, drawing upon the ideals and experiences of both the past and the present without the dictates of external authority.

2. A Christian must have his own experience with God, the outcome of his own faith, issuing in a life of penitence, humility and service.

3. A Christian must have fellowship with all souls that have fellowship with God and anything that hinders that fellowship is essentially evil and its abolition is as imperative as the removal of anything that hinders the fellowship of the soul with God.

4. A Christian's life, as indeed the Church's life, must interpret love as revealed in the life and death of Jesus, accepting it so fully as to be willing to take the risk it involves in the midst of a society that has not yet accepted it.

These propositions are reasonable and they indicate clearly that we must go beyond where we are if we are to find even the atmosphere that shall make possible the unity of the Church. Conferences are helpful, but conferences alone cannot unite the divided Church; working together is helpful, but simply working together will not solve the problem; there must be divine power. The Church is the offspring of God and the first fruits of mankind. It can only survive by fulfilling its mission which is to manifest God to men and to unify mankind into brotherhood. Neither the manifesting of God nor the unifying

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of men can be done apart from the power that comes from above. Present day organized Christianity lacks that power. Tragic as it may be to acknowledge it, nevertheless it is true that while we are increasing in Church efficiency and Church activities, we are not producing an increase in Christian power. We have grown tremendously rich in material things and profoundly learned in the sciences and philosophies of the world, and I know not but that Christ is saying to us, as He said to the Church in Laodicea

“Because thou sayest, I am rich and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”¹

These words come with strange appropriateness. Christ speaks to us in the accents of a love like that which He spoke to a divided Judaism in His lamentation over Jerusalem. Long ago He came unto His own and they did not receive Him. He is appealing to us to-day by the condition of His Church, by the condition of the world, by His death and resurrection and by His Spirit's hunger in us for spiritual growth, no one of which is satisfied with anything less than a united Church. Shall we heed the appeal? For myself, and every

¹ Rev. 3: 17-19.

man must answer for himself before God, I feel ill at ease with a sectarian, the man who is ever contending for a side, believing that it is not possible for him to be mistaken about the things on which we differ and maintaining denominational superiority and aloofness. It is immaterial whether he be a Disciple or an Episcopalian or a Baptist or a Roman Catholic or a Presbyterian or a Lutheran or a Methodist or an Old Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist, I am ill at ease with him because I am conscious that the thing for which he stands I hate. There are multitudes who are preëminently Christian first and are denominationally affiliated from necessity. They have an atmosphere about them like the golden days of June and every lover of God feels at home in their company, but sectarianism is an intruder—uncouth, unbrotherly and the damnable heresy of Christendom. I hate it and absolutely refuse to wear its trammels irrespective of consequences.

After Cato was sent to arbitrate the differences between the Carthaginians and King Masinissa, he ever afterwards closed every speech in the Roman senate with the well-known words: "For the rest, I vote that Carthage must be destroyed."¹ I close this lecture with these words: Sectarianism must be abolished. Henceforth let no man glory in his denomination; that is sectarianism: but let all men glory in Christ and practice brotherhood with men; that is Christianity.

¹ "*Ceterum censeo Carthaginem esse delendam.*"

II

CHRISTIAN UNITY: ITS GROWTH

THE growth of the Church into unity is as true to its origin as tulip blossoms are to tulip bulbs. However schismatic the soil the seed will send its roots into all temperaments, classes and nationalities until the best in them will furnish nutrition for the seeds' growth into stalk and blossom. Stormy atmospheres have swept and will continue to sweep around its tender growth, toughening its fibre for a blossom of the rarest beauty. If there were not a single sentence in the Scriptures relative to the unity of the Church the fact that the Church came from God would still make unity its ultimate and normal condition biologically. Living things grow. The growth of the Church into unity must be in conformity to the eternal laws of life.

But to the Scriptures, which lie before us like a landscape, with fertile plains and beautiful gardens, with wooded lands and swampy meadows, with rolling hills and mountain tops. That far-visioned statement—"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith"—is one of the Himalayan peaks—so far in the distance and so high that we can scarcely see the line that divides the moun-

tain top from the sky. Between us and it lies the untrodden country. But the Atlantic Ocean was once without a path across its three thousand miles of waves; likewise the skies were once without paths to their fascinating heights; and everything to which men have attained has been seen first in the distance, then by constant advance the goal has been reached. We recognize the advancement and worth of the sciences. Their contributions have been brilliant and inestimable, but the greatest contribution to these times is the universal awakening of a desire for growth "unto the unity of the faith." Waiving every other problem, the growth of the divided Church of Christ into unity must hold priority.

I. The Scripture records are abundant in sustaining the concept of unity in the early Church. Jesus emphasized the principle of unity and prayed for the unity of His disciples. The first move of the Church in its evangelistic work was breaking down the walls of two thousand years' standing between Jews and Gentiles, thereby marking the birth of a new internationalism. Jesus is the Saviour of all nations. The Bishop of Oxford truly says, "Jesus both rejected and refused to associate Himself with the current patriotism of His nation and positively laid the basis of universalism in His dealings with mankind."¹ If these national walls were to be leveled by the love of God manifested among men, how much more every other barrier is to

¹ *The Cambridge Magazine*, May 25, 1918.

be leveled! Nothing so strongly proves the falsity of divided Christianity as its ability to create barriers, when its original purpose was to abolish all barriers. Christianity is preëminently a social religion and a world brotherhood was the dream of its Founder, who so beautifully passes from His heart to ours the badge of discipleship, when He says,

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹

In every instance the apostolic writers sustain the concept of unity. On the appearance of division in the Church at Corinth, Paul says,

“For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? . . . And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able; for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men? For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men? What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now

¹ John 13:35.

he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are God's fellow-workers: ye are God's husbandry, God's building."¹

What burning words! The low spirituality of the Corinthian Church is attributed to their divisive and party spirit with a general condemnation of their whole policy. It is one of the severest of all Scriptural indictments and applies with remarkable appropriateness to present day conditions. There is no one of us but feels that the tides of spirituality are low—the tides in my heart and yours. A fundamental part of spiritual life is communion with the spirits of the whole Church. Denominationalism—including Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant—narrows this communion largely to those of one denomination, thereby dwarfing the whole spiritual life of the Church. It is a common thing to look to all other causes other than the real one. In Paul's diagnosis of the Corinthian Church he locates the cause of the disease at once, although by so doing he involves his own name in a scandal for all ages. If his words had been written in this year of our Lord they could not have been more applicable to us now. Substitute for the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ such names as designate our Christian parties to-day, including my own party, which has taken the name of Christ, and it is as clear a violation of the apostolic admonition as stealing is a violation

¹ 1 Cor. I: 11-13; 3: 1-9.

of the eighth commandment. I am not accusing our forebears. I have no word of condemnation for the dead, be they saints or sinners. I am talking about ourselves. I am accusing my own heart and yours. I am not at ease in this condition. I know that the thing is wrong. I am a partner to the wrong as is every other Christian—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant—and therefore it must become a matter of personal concern to me and to all other Christians. Every Christian who denies any such partnership and therefore any concern about the matter makes more bold his sectarianism. The time is now for us to seek with earnestness for a new heart in our attitude and disposition toward the will of God regarding the unity of the Church, abolishing party names and lifting the name of Christ above its divisive capacity to its rightful place of universal dominion.

Paul's condemnation rested upon the whole Corinthian Church—those who took the names of men and those who took a divided Christ. Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and all Protestant bodies are under indictment and an indictment that indicates we are, after nearly nineteen hundred years, not only involved in, but maintaining with considerable satisfaction the establishment of the policy of the Corinthian Church—a policy which the Apostle so severely condemned as to classify the Corinthian Church as carnal and not spiritual. If the Corinthian Church was carnal in consequence of division in

its incipency, how much more must it be so in the Church at large with its multiplicity of divisions, some of them centuries old! We must face the fact that we are now in the period of adolescence in our religious experiences. Trammeled by the Corinthian policy we are working against difficulties which can never be remedied except by abolishing the Corinthian policy for that policy which will aid the Church in its normal growth into unity.

The concept of unity was vital in the faith of the Apostle Paul. Sentence after sentence dealing directly or indirectly with this theme may be found in every epistle which he wrote—sometimes whole paragraphs, such as in his epistle to the Church at Ephesus, when he says,

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in all. . . . And He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the

sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him, Who is the Head, even Christ; from Whom all the Body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.”¹

Wonderful picture! Modest as Nature; yet surpassing in sublimity anything in Nature! We talk about the wonders and the charm of the physical world such as the Niagara Falls or Mont Blanc or the Grand Canyon of Arizona or the rolling ocean or the star-lit sky or the richly coloured sunset. These are but nursery toys by the side of what the Apostle has flung before our vision. We are haunted by this lofty ideal because of the possibilities that are within us for its attainment. There is an undeveloped greatness in every Christian far beyond where he now is. To get out of the narrow spiritual vision of these times we must admire the great things—the greatness of the Church of Christ, which extends far beyond the boundaries of any communion in Christendom. Knowledge, experience and reflection open up the far vistas of spiritual possibility. Let us leave petty things to the graveyard, else their consideration may make a tomb of our great spiritual ideals.

The deep experiences of the soul give atmosphere to the growth of the Church. The Apostle names the elements of the atmosphere

¹ Eph. 4: 1-6; 11-16.

for this development in such terms as "lowliness," "meekness," "longsuffering," "forbearing," "love," and "diligence." These elements, which are already rising in the souls of many in the various communions, have in themselves the hope of a united Christendom. They are as modest as the sun and penetrating as the summer air, enabling soul to act upon soul like the April atmosphere upon tulip bulbs and violet roots.

II. History is replete with appeals and movements for the unity of the Church. The voices of Origen, Tertullian, Augustine and others in the period following the Apostles sounded the same note as that in the apostolic writings. The changes in matters of Church government in the early centuries, especially the rise of the episcopate, had their origin in efforts to maintain unity. These changes, however, developed an ecclesiasticism which hastened the great division of 1054, separating the Eastern and Western Churches. But still there were yearnings for fellowship with the whole Church from earnest hearts like Bernard, who says,

"Who can grant me, before I die, to see the Church of God, such as she has been in the primitive times?"

The Protestant Reformation was another severe wrench, leaving the Roman Catholic Church one, but paving the way to such a multiplicity of divisions among Protestants that the Roman Catholic orator Bossuet exclaims,

"Great God! Is it possible that upon the same matters

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and same questions, so many multiplied acts, so many divisions and different confessions of faith are necessary? . . . These variations fill us with astonishment.”¹

Melanchthon was the one irenic character of the Protestant Reformation, but he was overshadowed by the storm of bitter controversy. Nevertheless Calvin, writing to Cranmer in 1553, says,

“I should not hesitate to cross ten seas if by this means holy communion might prevail among the members of Christ.”

George Calixtus was the earliest of modern apostles of reconciliation in the divided Church. He proposed as a basis the New Testament as interpreted by the Apostles' Creed. Through his efforts the conference of Thorn was held, lasting for months and being participated in by thirty-seven Lutherans, twenty-seven Roman Catholics and fifteen members of the Reformed Church. From its session Calixtus was excluded by his Lutheran brethren and identified with the number of the beast in the Apocalypse. In one of his letters written in gentleness and love to the Roman Catholic universities of Germany he says,

“If I may but help toward the healing of our schisms, I would shrink from no cares and night watchings, no efforts and no dangers . . . nay, I will never spare

¹“History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches,” Vol. I.

either my life nor my blood, if so be I may purchase the peace of the Church.”¹

All Europe wearied under theological dissension. Hugo Grotius lent his great intellect to the cause of peace as a statesman rather than a theologian and sought an adjustment of Protestant differences with a reformed Roman Catholicism. Leibnitz and Bossuet conducted a lengthy correspondence in the same interest. Leibnitz likewise sought reconciliation between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. A group in the theological seminary at Frankfort-on-the-Oder met constantly in search for some basis of unity. Out of those conferences came that fine statement of Rupertus Meldenius, modified frequently but originally given as follows:

“Unity in things necessary, liberty in things unnecessary, and charity in both, would do all our work.”²

John Dury, who devoted his life to the cause of union, traveled extensively throughout Europe, advocating the abolition of party names and bitter controversies and the establishment of national Churches. It received favourable consid-

¹Dowding's "Life and Correspondence of George Calixtus."

²Richard Baxter in his "True and Only Way of Concord of All Christians" gives the translation from the Latin, which is: "*Si in necessariis sit unitas, in non-necessariis libertas, in utrisque caritas, optimo certe loco essent res nostrae.*" According to Bishop John F. Hurst in a lecture delivered at the Union Theological Seminary in 1896 and published in "Church Unity," the first mention of this sentence occurs in an anonymous book entitled "Parænesis Votiva," in which it is attributed to Rupertus Meldenius.

eration from many Church leaders, but the death of his chief patron, Gustavus Adolphus, cut short any further development. Dupin proposed as a basis of union between the Church of Rome and the Church of England compromises on auricular confession, pope's supremacy, religious vows, Lenten fasts and abstinence and celibacy of the clergy. At the same time he entered into negotiations through Peter the Great for the Greek Church to come into the union, but Pope Clement XI severely censured him and Louis XIV dismissed him from among the doctors of the Sorbonne.

Richard Baxter preached constantly on the necessity of a united Church and wrote numerous pamphlets in its behalf. In his "True and Only Way of Concord of All Christians," he says,

"Unity and concord is the Church's beauty. It makes us amiable even to the eyes of nature and venerable and terrible even to the eyes of malice. . . . The concord of believers does greatly conduce to the success of the ministry and the propagation of the Gospel and the conviction and salvation of ungodly souls. . . . When Christ prayed for the unity of His disciples, He redoubled His argument from the effect or end (that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me and hath loved them). Would this make the world believe that Christ was sent of God? Yes, undoubtedly. If all Christians were reduced to a holy concord it would do more to win the heathen world than all other means can do without it."

Page after page rings with the call for the unity of the Church. He continues,

"Why, sirs, have not Independents, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, etc., one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Creed, one Scripture, one hope of everlasting life? Are our disagreements so great that we may not live together in love, and close in fraternal union and unity? Are we not of one religion? Do we differ in fundamentals or substantials? Will not conscience worry us? Will not posterity curse us if by our divisions we betray the Gospel into the hands of the enemies? And if by our mutual envyings and jealousies and perverse zeal for our several conceits, we should keep open the breach for all heresies and wickedness to enter, we will make a prey for our own poor people's souls. . . . Let us straiten the bond of Christian unity and love, and help each other against the powers of hell, and join our forces against one common enemy."

Edward Stillingfleet, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, boldly declared the form of Church government a non-essential. He wrote a stirring volume under the title "Irenicum," in which he sought for common ground of reconciliation between episcopacy and Presbyterianism. He says,

"For the Church to require more than Christ Himself did, or make the condition of her communion more than our Saviour did of discipleship, is wholly unwarranted."

John Owen was a tower of strength among the Puritans of his day. He says,

"Wherever there is a man or a body of men, who are united to Him by a living faith and are keeping His commandments, he or they are in communion with the Church of God. . . . But I verily believe that when God shall accomplish it, it will be the *effect* of love, and not the *cause* of love."

William Chillingworth pleaded for a return to the Scriptures as the only path for the unity of God's people. Dying in prison in consequence of his faith, he says,

"Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men for not subscribing to the words of men, as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe in Christ and to call no man master but Him only."

John Wesley makes the appeal for unity in the very preface of his "Notes Upon the New Testament." He says,

"Would to God that all the party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms, which have divided the Christian world, were forgot, and that we might all agree to sit down together, as humble, loving disciples, at the feet of our common Master, to hear His word, to imbibe His Spirit, and to transcribe His life in our own!"

Robert Hall pleaded for the union of all Christians in his practice of broad and generous principles. He says,

"Nothing more abhorrent to the principles and maxims of the sacred oracles can be conceived than the idea of a plurality of true Churches, neither in actual communion with each other, nor in the capacity for such communion. Though this rending of the seamless coat of our Saviour, this schism in the members of His mystical Body, is by far the greatest calamity which has befallen the Christian interest, and one of the most fatal effects of the great apostasy foretold by the sacred penman, we have been so long familiarized to it, as to be scarcely sensible of its enormity; nor does it excite

suspicion or concern in any degree proportioned to what would be felt by one who had contemplated the Church in the first ages. Christian societies regarding each other with the jealousies of rival empires, each trying to raise itself on the ruin of all the others, making extravagant boasts of superior purity, generally in exact proportion to their departures from it, and scarcely deigning to acknowledge the possibility of obtaining salvation out of their pale, is the odious and disgusting spectacle which modern Christendom presents. The evils which result from this state of division are incalculable. It supplies infidels with their most plausible topics of invective; it hardens the conscience of the irreligious; it weakens the hands of the good, impedes the efficiency of prayer, and is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world.”¹

Alexander Campbell spent his life in the advocacy of Christian unity. Of him Bishop John F. Hurst, in his “Short History of the Christian Church,” affirms “Few men have impressed themselves more profoundly on the religious life of their age than he.” Campbell says in his “Christian System,”

“No mortal need fancy that he shall have the honour of devising either the plan of uniting Christians into one holy band of zealous coöperation, or of converting Jews and Gentiles to the faith that Jesus is that seed in Whom all the families of the earth are yet to be blessed. The plan is divine. It is ordained by God; and, better still, it is already revealed. Is any one impatient to hear it? Let him again read the intercessions of the Lord Mes-

¹ “The Works of Robert Hall,” with Memoir by Gregory.

siah in the seventeenth chapter of John. Let him then examine the two following propositions, and say whether these do not express heaven's own scheme of augmenting and conserving the Body of Christ. Nothing is essential to the conversion of the world but the union and coöperation of Christians. Nothing is essential to the union of Christians but the Apostles' teaching or testimony. Or does he choose to express the plan of the Self-Existent in other words? Then he may change the order, and say—The testimony of the Apostles is the only and all-sufficient means of uniting all Christians. The union of Christians with the Apostles' testimony is all-sufficient and alone sufficient to the conversion of the world. Neither truth alone nor union alone is sufficient to subdue the unbelieving nations; but truth and union combined are omnipotent. They are omnipotent, for God is in them and with them, and has consecrated and blessed them for this very purpose."

Scores of others have testified for the unity of the Church—men like John Milton, the poet; Johannes Coccejus, the scholar; Jeremy Taylor, the preacher; John Locke, the philosopher; and in more recent years, Philip Schaff, the theologian, until the bibliography on Christian unity extends into thousands of volumes.

Movements in the interest of unity have arisen. Perhaps the most notable is that which arose about the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Presbyterian Church under the leadership of Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander, which was first called the "Christian Association" and afterwards the "Disciples of Christ." The agreement among themselves was very simple, being an irenic effort toward a return to the be-

beliefs and practices of the Church of the New Testament times in order to help in finding the way to the unity of the Church of these times. Being wearied with theological dissension they sought for the simple faith of the early disciples. They had not the slightest idea of starting another communion. In fact they sought earnestly to prevent it. Their position, however, involved them in severe controversies. They had to pay the price of separation for their convictions, thereby adding another to the already too numerous divisions in the Protestant household, and later came a division among themselves over missionary methods and instrumental music, increasing the scandal to two bodies in the United States census tables. A movement in the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky arose a few years earlier under the name "Christian." These two movements, however, united in part and the names "Christian" and "Disciple of Christ" have been used interchangeably. They have become one of the largest religious bodies in the United States, having considerably over a million members, with their missionary stations under nearly every flag around the globe. They stand primarily as a witness to the beliefs and practices of the New Testament Church as a contribution to the unity of the divided Church. Unfortunately, however, the Disciples frequently yielded to the results of severe controversies, maintaining in many instances a policy of aloofness, which is always sectarian, rather than a policy of inter-

denominational fellowship to which they were originally pledged.

A few years later at the instance of Frederick William III, the Lutheran and Reformed Churches effected a union under the title of the "United Evangelical State Church" in Prussia and six other German states, presenting for a time a Protestant unity against Roman Catholic unity. Neither party was required to renounce any important doctrines, but dissension arose and in a few years there were three separate Churches where before had been two. The union movements in Scotland have been more satisfactory, although even there remnants have remained out of the unions, thereby maintaining the divisive line, as was the case in the union between the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, a remnant of the Cumberlands refusing to go into the union. In 1870 the Old and New School Presbyterians reunited. The union movement in Canada, beginning in 1884 with the union of the six Methodist bodies, has been steadily going forward, although occasionally encountering opposition. In 1911 the Northern Baptists and Free Baptists united their general work preparatory to organic union. The three largest Lutheran bodies in the United States have united under the name "United Lutheran Church in America," and the union of various other bodies is already in the atmosphere of friendly conferences.

Heartening reports come from the lands be-

yond America. The various Presbyterian bodies and the Reformed have united in Japan under a common name; likewise union has been effected between these bodies in India, China, Korea, Mexico and Brazil. The Lutheran bodies in India have united; likewise the Methodists in Japan as they have in New Zealand. The Anglicans of England, Canada and the United States have united in China, Japan and India. Union schools and hospitals have been established in China, India, the Philippines, South America and elsewhere, as for instance, in the Nanking university, theological school and hospital the Presbyterians, Methodists, Northern Baptists and Disciples have united in that common task.

The formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 was a definite step toward unity. The proposal from the House of Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1886, in which the Pan-Anglican Council of Bishops at Lambeth Palace in 1888 joined, opened one of the most interesting and profitable discussions on Christian unity. It especially marked the irenic element entering largely into the discussion of a united Christendom. A few years after came proposals from the Congregational Church and still later movements in behalf of unity arose generally in various parts of the world. The National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches of England was organized in 1895 for facilitating intercourse and coöperation among Evangelical Free

Churches. The Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom had its origin a few years earlier. Its purpose is intercessory prayer for the reunion of the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican communions. In 1896 the Churchman's Union was organized for the purpose of cultivation of friendly relations between the Church of England and all other Christian bodies.

The twentieth century opened with the organization of the Christian Unity Association of Scotland, which seeks to maintain, foster and express the consciousness of the underlying unity that is shared by the many members of the different Churches in Scotland. In 1906 and 1907 eighteen resolutions were passed by a conference in Melbourne composed of representatives of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania and the Presbyterian Church of Australia; later, in 1911, these resolutions became the basis of a conference in New York between Episcopalians of the Christian Unity Foundation and Presbyterians; and in 1912 between Episcopalians and Congregationalists; and in 1913 between Episcopalians and Disciples.¹ In 1908 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was organized for coöperation of the various Protestant communions in service rather than in an attempt to unite upon definitions of theology and polity. Church federations among Protestant

¹ These resolutions are published in "Towards Christian Unity" by Peter Ainslie.

bodies have become the generally accepted procedure in most of the countries of the world.

The Edinburgh missionary conference marked another definite step toward unity. In 1910 the Protestant Episcopal Christian Unity Foundation was organized for the purpose of promoting Christian unity throughout the world by research and conference. In that same year the Protestant Episcopal Commission on a World Conference on Faith and Order was appointed. They have held a preparatory American conference and have sent three deputations abroad—the first to the Church of England and the second to the non-Anglican Churches of Great Britain and Ireland, and the third to Europe for a visitation to the continental Churches.¹ On the same day, October 19, 1910, that the Episcopalians appointed their commission the Disciples' Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity was organized for the purpose of intercessory prayer, friendly conferences and distribution of irenic literature in behalf of Christian unity. This organization named Pentecost Sunday as the day for special prayers for and sermons on Christian unity in all Churches.¹ The Presbyterians already had a committee on Church Coöperation and Union. That year the Congregationalists appointed a Committee on Comity, Federation and Unity. In 1911 the Fellowship movement was started in England for the cultivation of corporate prayer and thought for a new spiritual fellow-

¹ See Appendix.

ship and communion with all branches of the Christian Church. The Kikuyu conference in British East Africa in 1913 included Anglicans, Presbyterians, Friends, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists and the African Inland Mission, with the prospects of the ultimate union of the native Churches, but the protest from the Bishop of Zanzibar brought a cancellation of all the agreements. However, a second conference was held in Kikuyu in 1918. In that year the Second Interim Report of the British committee appeared;¹ likewise that year came the call from the Scandinavian Churches through Archbishop Nathan Söderblom.¹ In that same year the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. convened in Philadelphia a council on organic union of all evangelical Protestant Churches of America. An *ad interim* committee representing sixteen Protestant bodies was appointed to meet monthly for conference relative to defining a plan of procedure. In 1920 came the Universal Conference of the Church of Christ on Life and Work under the leadership of Archbishop Söderblom of Uppsala in association with the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It proposes to include the whole Church in its task of spiritual development and coöperative service. It is interesting to observe that all these movements are supplementary rather than competitive, which indi-

¹ See Appendix.

cates that we are coming into a different atmosphere from that which produced the multiplicity of denominations. Sectarianism will contend to the last ditch, but these movements for co-operation and unity are rising upon such permanent bases and advancing so positively toward larger fellowships that they are constantly furnishing outlets to ventures of faith.

Movements not dealing directly with Christian unity have arisen and contributed directly to its interests, such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Christian Endeavour Society, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, International Sunday-school lessons, the Student Volunteers and the Laymen's Missionary Movement. This catalogue of unions, unity organizations, federations, conferences and interdenominational organizations might continue, including many organizations and conferences as important as those I have named. Christian unity is on the lips of the multitudes to-day and is gradually becoming as universal in its discussion as political democracy. It has grown in spite of protests, bitter controversies and uncharitable practices, until its reasonableness is finding place in the thought of the world.

III. The outstanding and definite proposals for unity in these times may be summed up under those proposals that have been presented through the years by the Roman Catholics, by the Protestant Episcopalians and by the Disciples of Christ,

Others have spoken from time to time regarding Christian unity, especially the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists, but the three bodies named have made this their theme in season and out of season until it is not unfair to others to single out these three. The first centers in papal supremacy, the second in the episcopate, and the third in a democracy, with Christ as the overruling Head, however, in all three proposals.

To be perfectly accurate regarding the Roman Catholics, I asked his Eminence, Cardinal Gibbons, to state in his own language the proposals of the Roman Catholics. This he has kindly done in a personal letter in the following statement:

“I heartily join in the effort for Christian unity, for schism is a curse, whereas union is a blessing. But Jesus Christ has pointed out the only means by which this unity can be brought about and maintained, viz., the recognition of Peter and his successors as the Head of the Church. Build upon this foundation and you will not erect a tower of Babel, nor build upon sand. If all Christian sects were united with the center of unity, then the scattered hosts of Christendom would form an army which atheism and infidelity could not long withstand. Then, indeed, all could exclaim with Balaam: ‘How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel.’”

The proposals of the Protestant Episcopalians in 1886 and concurred in by the Church of Eng-

land in 1888 are contained in the Chicago-Lambeth articles, which are as follows:

"I. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed word of God.

"II. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

"III. The two sacraments,—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord,—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.

"IV. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."

The proposals of the Disciples of Christ may be stated as follows:

(1) A catholic name for individuals, such as "Disciples," "Christians," etc., and for the whole body, "Church of Christ," "Church of God," "Christian Church," etc.

(2) A catholic confession as expressed in the words of the Apostle Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(3) A catholic book—the Holy Scriptures—as sufficient for the rule of Christian life.

(4) A catholic administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as practiced in the New Testament times and with the use of Christ's words.

(5) A catholic polity of Church government, recognizing the universal suffrage and priesthood of all believers.

(6) A catholic brotherhood, holding fellowship in the Lord's Supper with all who have received Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

It must be recognized that some of the most distinguished people in the history of the world have held membership in the bodies represented by these three proposals and at the same time there have been among them some of the most devout souls in the history of the whole Church. Consequently these proposals are on equality and deserve equally courteous consideration. It is not my purpose to discuss them at this time.¹ They must stand on their merits. Only it seems preëminently pertinent to inquire, Have they functioned well in behalf of Christian unity? To this hard question one must face the answers. To the first proposals the answer is in the severe division of the eleventh century and the severer division of the sixteenth century; to the second proposals the answer is in the three divisive and unreconciled episcopates and several smaller episcopates; to the third proposals the answer is in the division of about four hundred thousand members going off on such minor matters as missionary methods and Church music. Whatever one may think of these answers, which are the cold facts of history, the growth of Christian unity out of which these have come and of which these are parts, must find its blossom in an atmosphere more pregnant with the Spirit of our Lord

¹ In the author's Yale Lectures "The Message of the Disciples for the Union of the Church," he discusses the Disciples, Fleming H. Revell Co.

Jesus Christ. Our need is not so much for a plan as for a spirit—the Spirit of Christ. A common creed will not solve the problem; only a common spirit will—the Spirit of the common Saviour of us all in the hearts of those who believe in Him. “If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” We are not depending so much upon a common experience for the way to unity as upon a common revelation. Christianity is of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is important to remember that birds do not go back into their shells, that tulip blossoms do not go back into their bulbs, that Christianity could not go back into Judaism and that Protestantism cannot go back under the rule of Rome. Neither can Protestantism remain where it is, for it was only partially triumphant in the sixteenth century Reformation, which is attested by the divisions among Protestants and their semi-Roman theologies, especially those pertaining to the unexplainable things in religion. The principles of biology must prevail if our growth is to be toward God. The nearer we get to truth, the more simple and comprehensive it is, as the more of God we possess, the more humble and willing we are. Christianity is not a system of concealment, but instead is the way to the full and complete revealing of truth.

It is likewise important to remember that an ecclesiastical unity like that of Rome is both undesirable and impossible, nor is a multiplicity of

denominations as in Protestantism desirable. It may be said here also that no student of this problem is looking for unity by the way of uniformity, any more than one looks for uniformity in a man and woman when they marry in that they shall have the same colour of eyes, the same colour of hair, be the same height, be the same weight, etc. No, we do not look for unity by any such uniformity, but we do look for the man and the woman who marry to conform to the will of God in staying married and not conform to their wills and caprices in getting divorced. Christ can have but one bride, but organized Christianity has proudly made of Him a polygamous Lord with nearly two hundred brides, some of these brides claiming Him exclusively their own, while others willingly share Him with the other brides of Christendom, but in either event a divided Church fosters polygamy upon Jesus Christ, making Him the husband of many brides instead of the husband of one. Happily it appears sure that for a united Christendom we must go beyond any one of the present Christian organizations, for it must be frankly said that, after surveying the Church forces of the whole world, there is no organized Church to-day that meets the need. The first step toward unity, however, appears to be the unity of the Protestant household, for if the Protestants cannot get together there need be no further talk, for the present at least, about the unity of the other parts of Christendom. This Protestant

unity is possible now with liberty in matters of forms, organizations, etc., but it must be a unity in Christ as Lord and Saviour and a coöperative brotherhood that is not so much concerned with getting its rights as it is in manifesting the will of God in the attitude of brother to brother in all international social, economic and spiritual relations.

Blossoms are the promises of fruit. Since in these times the blossoms of Christian unity are in evidence around the world, we must be courageous in our expectations of the fruit and at the same time be bold in our ventures of faith, for ventures are the footprints of prophecies. Unity may not come as we expect it. The atmosphere of these times is too cloudy for us to see clearly, but that need not affect our confidence in the rule of the will of God. The unity of Christendom must find its basis in Christ, satisfactory to Him, Who is our Lord, and to all Christians, who are our brothers. Present day transactions are showing us that the trend of affairs is away from ecclesiastical autocracy and is toward Christian democracy. All autocratic ecclesiasticisms will change or decay. Times are changing and changing rapidly. According to Professor Guyot the plant life is divided into three periods. The first is very slow, the second is more rapid and the third is of whirling rapidity. The first is the time of the roots' getting fast hold on the earth, the second is the stem shooting up and the third is the period of blossom and fruit.

It is so with the Church. In the first period the roots were taking hold in the depths of our humanity. It was a long period and sometimes it seemed that the darkness almost obscured the light, but there were noble souls in those days. I doubt not but if we had been living in the time of Francis of Assisi even some of us would have been Franciscans and some of our women would have been disciples of Catherine of Genoa. That type of religion has passed, but those days had their problems and Christ was not without His witnesses. The roots of a living faith went down, down into our humanity.

In the second period the plant has been sending up its stem, toughening and growing in these days of Christian activity and world-wide service. We have already seen the necessity of closer co-operation. Multitudes of us are feeling that the time has come when we must stand together. Federation is a contribution to this end and at the same time is a prophecy of closer affiliation. We gladly use it now, but we are eagerly looking to the time when there shall be a united Church in full conformity to the prayer of our Lord, for nothing else will satisfy this divine dream. Some day the third period will be upon us. I know not when nor how, but God's orchards will be in full bloom and the fruit will be a united Church of Christ on earth. Says that Hindu scholar, Paul Karishka, in one of his books, "Jesus of Nazareth is a life, a life, a life." Do not forget this. In it lies the secret of a

united Christendom. Some of us are already feeling it and consequently are looking sympathetically on the positions of others. We are trying to get the other man's viewpoint, thereby appreciating more fully what he stands for. The task is profoundly grave and far more complex than most of us recognize.

We are already freeing ourselves from sectarian thought and are thinking in the sphere of the universal. We are beginning to see that in the sadly divided House of Christ, including Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant, are earnest Christians, as earnestly desiring to know God and to walk in His paths as we are. "We offend against the spirit of Christianity if we are self-assertive, if we contend for a side, if we cannot think it is possible that we are mistaken, if we take all our opinions as convictions, if we do not try to learn from one another. All these offenses insulate us from one another, break the circuit, and so far disable the religion of Christ as an organ for discerning the will of God." Repentance of the whole Church—a repentance of us all in terms of a new attitude of mind and heart—will do more to bring a new day in the Church of Christ for its growth into unity than any other experience in the possibility of the human soul. Sectarianism must be abolished. Henceforth let no man glory in his denomination; that is sectarianism: but let all men glory in Christ and practice brotherhood with all men; that is Christianity.

III

CHRISTIAN UNITY: ITS OUTLOOK

ON one occasion in the discussion of an international issue in the British Parliament the Prime Minister said to his colleagues, "Gentlemen, you must study larger maps." This applies with equal force to ourselves in our outlook upon Christian unity. At the very outset, discouraging as it may be, we must not only include the whole Church in our conception—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and all others who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, but look beyond where these divisions are now to what the Church of Christ ought to be. To many this may seem a Utopian dream. I grant that sometimes from present indications impossibility looms so high that the way appears to be even impassable to human vision, but if one yields to his prejudices, affirming that certain bodies are not to be considered as desirable members in this fellowship of unity, such a one forthwith puts himself out of the honest search for the paths of truth. Every Christian needs every other Christian for the task of redeeming a lost world, as well as for completing the fullness of the Christian life, and

Christ needs the whole Church to fill up His glory. His need, our need and the world's need crowd the future with a hope that lingers like the morning star.

The ecclesiastical systems of these various bodies may appear as irreconcilable as the astronomical views of Pythagoras, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton, but there are underlying truths in all of these bodies as there were in the crudest conceptions of Pythagoras and Copernicus regarding the planetary paths. At the same time we must recognize the great barriers, made greater by history and prejudice than they were at the beginning. It is our task to discover the underlying foundations of unity throughout the whole Church, to reduce them to as simple and comprehensive elements as possible, and to build up from those indisputable foundations. We would be blind not to recognize the great barriers in the way of progress, but the purpose of Christianity is to remove barriers. He loses his chance in life who sits idly by nursing his prejudices and standing picket guard by his traditions while a world is dying of hunger for God. Both the Old and New Testaments proclaim in the ringing voices of Isaiah and John the task of Jehovah's servants. They say,

"Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall

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be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.”¹

It is the graphic picture of Jehovah's workmen adjusting our undeveloped race, symbolized by such terms as “wilderness,” “desert,” “highway,” “valley,” “mountain,” “hill,” “uneven” and “rough places.” But the workmen have fallen out among themselves, leaving the work undone or inefficiently done, for only a sympathetic union of workmen can accomplish a task of such divine appointment. Consequently our outlook is crowded with enormous tasks—the greatest in the dream of the farthest visioned man. Were there indications of perpetual division among us, I should drop into despair and find my only consolation in the hope that a remnant from among the nations was the best after all that Jesus could win to Himself. But Jesus died for all and nothing short of a redeemed world will satisfy Him or those who follow Him. It is to that end that we give ourselves to the outlook of Christian unity.

I. We must face the facts. The Church is divided and a divisive Christianity is weakened. To say that Jesus Christ rules in His Church to-day is a cunning device of shifting the blame of the sin of division from our own shoulders to the shoulders of Christ, and so not infrequently we hear arguments justifying division on the ground that it is in the providence of a wise heavenly Father

¹ Isa. 40: 3-5; Luke 3: 4-6.

and that all these divisions stand for some definite truth. Such arguments find their analogy in those erstwhile arguments advanced in support of human slavery, polygamy, etc. If the Episcopalians or the Disciples or the Presbyterians or the Methodists or the Baptists or the Congregationalists or the Lutherans or the New Jerusalem Church or the Church of God in Christ Jesus or the Old Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists and so on, including the two hundred varieties, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, etc., possess certain divine truth that no other possesses, why should an Episcopalian or a Disciple or a Presbyterian or a Methodist or a Baptist or a Congregationalist or a Lutheran or a member of the New Jerusalem Church or a member of the Church of God in Christ Jesus or an Old Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptist go through this world with a two-hundredth part of truth when by taking in what some of the others possess he might get fifty per cent. of divine truth? Or if it be acknowledged that he have capacity for the whole truth he might possess the two hundred parts. This is all religious nonsense. All of these divisions contain truth, but it is that truth that is common to them all. Their peculiarities are the things upon which they have become divided and somewhere in these peculiarities are the deposits of error. Remove the error and truth will flow together like water in a common channel. The Church as the world knows it does not represent the character of

Jesus Christ. These long, fast and established divisions, maintaining irreconcilable discord in the House of God, mark the masterpiece of Satan. We only confuse our thinking when we attempt to delude ourselves in believing that these conditions are according to the will of God. It is our sin and Jesus Christ waits for us who believe in Him to adopt the ministry of reconciliation and thereby prepare the way for His rule in His Church.

Discuss any theme—national or international, social or economic, political or religious—and underlying all of these is justice, freedom, brotherhood and righteousness, no one of which can properly function through a divisive Christianity, much less the functioning of all for the betterment of mankind. Every Christian, whether Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican or Protestant, is a member of a Christian party. So long as the Church is divided I cannot be otherwise than a member of some party in Christendom unless I sever my relations with Christianity. The lesser of the two evils is maintaining party membership. If any dissent from this position of party membership it is finding in his own party the sectarian claim of being the one and only Church with all other parties numbered among the sects—not an uncommon claim, however, among many bodies; but this need not be discussed here, other than to say it is a remnant of that sectarian Jewish position that they were the highly favoured of the Almighty and all

Gentiles were dogs. Such sectarian conceit is destined to crumble before fair-minded and enlightened thinking, so that humiliating as it may be the whole Church must sooner or later face the fact that every division is a party in Christendom and all of us are members of one or the other of these parties.

The next move is for us to rise above our party barriers and to think interdenominationally. That is to say, instead of elimination, until we shall find ourselves tied down to the thinking of one party because that chanced to be the party into which we were born or that is our choice of membership, we must proceed by the way of comprehension, as though each of us held membership in all the parties of Christendom, appropriating the worth of each in our quest for the broken pieces of the sacred chalice, which somehow and somewhere will be fitted together by the scarred hands of Christ. For myself I claim a place among those who are thinking interdenominationally in this royal quest. I will not be checked in my thinking either by my party affiliation or my party traditions, nor am I bound to think to-day what I thought yesterday. There must be freedom for entrance into the future.

No man can allow himself to be tied either to history or tradition if he has a real concern for the unity of the Church of Christ. If unity is to come only by the methods of his own party, then to be free and fair he must accord that right to every other party, which means a continuation

of our present party lines *ad infinitum*. These party lines must give way to a larger freedom and to a larger measure of genuine religion. The concern for our party must be secondary to our concern for the will of God in saving a lost world, which is dependent upon a united Church. Tragic issue! It is either a united Church according to the will of God and a saved world; or a divided Church according to the will of men and an infidel world. It is a choice between guarding the past with its mixed history of good and evil and making the future an improvement over the past by a united Christendom for the good of all. For myself—and each man must begin with himself—I am facing the future irrespective of what the past has been. I am not very much interested in preserving denominational autonomies and denominational traditions. Jesus gave His life away and at the same time gave a divine principle when He says,

“Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.”¹

I am perfectly willing to let the histories and traditions of the denominations—my own included—take care of themselves in the siftings of time. Whatever is good will survive in the succession of Christian experiences and the evil will perish. The dead do not need us; only the living perish for lack of help.

¹ Luke 9: 24.

If in preserving the past its purpose is to find justification for every division of Christians—and what is accorded to one division must be accorded to all—then I pray that what man remembers God may forget, until He shall say to us,

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.”¹

I would be untrue to my own heart and that of my fellows if I were not ready to say that, although my own party will stand comparison in growth and service with any of the American parties, I would be willing that all its history and tradition should be blotted out if thereby it would hasten the unity of Christendom; nay, more, I am willing that I myself shall be forgot in the remembrance of Christ if thereby His Church may be one.

The things that have divided the Church have been deeply rooted in our divisive human natures. The flesh has proven itself stronger than the Spirit and has triumphed for a time, but the triumph of the Spirit is the ultimate result of the implanting of the Spirit. All movements toward unity are prophecies of ultimate unity. We are already nearer to the goal than many of us think. When we discover that many of our convictions are merely long established prejudices and when these prejudices pass under the review of brotherly kindness and truth, our party barriers

¹ Isa. 44: 22.

will appear but trifling things by the side of winning a world to righteousness. When a Disciple married an Episcopalian the former wrote asking if it would be wrong for her to join her husband's Church. I answered, No, certainly not. And the same would be true were the case reversed and if the Episcopal clergyman's interest in the Church of Christ is above his interest in his party, he would likewise give the same answer. Either the wife should join the husband's Church or the husband should join the wife's Church, depending on local conditions and individual circumstances. A divided Church is bad enough, but a divided home is worse. The unity of the Church must begin in the unity of the home. Such sectarian talk as "I can never be anything but a Protestant Episcopalian," or "I can never be anything but a Presbyterian," or "I can never be anything but a Methodist," or "I can never be anything but a Baptist," or "I can never be anything but a Disciple," etc., ought never to be mentioned among those who are followers of Jesus Christ. The only question worth asking is, Am I such a Christian that I can be a real Christian to every other Christian in the whole Church?

If I be allowed the same freedom that I accord to others, that is to say, eliminating avowed loyalty to the standards of any party in contradistinction from the standards of some other party, I could hold membership in many of the religious bodies with no awkwardness whatso-

ever, affirming in each party my simple discipleship in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I now hold membership in a party, some of whose varying ethical standards I do not endorse. Why then, at the same time, should I not hold membership in another party, some of whose theological standards I do not endorse? Is theology more vital than ethics? Changing from one Church to another makes for sectarian pride, but holding interchurch membership—in different Churches at the same time—would rebuke sectarian pride and make for complete fellowship among Christians which is now impossible. Whatever my ordination once was and whatever episcopal ordination now is, neither is of such vital importance as to withhold me from receiving the latter if it would contribute to the unity of the Church—not, however, in any way recognizing apostolic succession with its assumed channel of special grace, but in cheerful recognition of the fact of episcopacy as one of the modes of Church government from very early times. Surely in the Church of the future there must be this freedom in accepting ordination by courtesy. All persons of orderly thinking recognize that there should be some kind of superintendency in Christian work. The mere title of the superintendent is secondary, but the fact of a constitutional superintendency is of meritorious worth.

Perhaps some might complain that to be equally at home with a forward looking Episcopalian or a forward looking Disciple indicates an ethical insincerity in one's thinking. Such complaints are based upon sectarian attitudes which

have been maintained through the years by the force of history and prejudice. Do not Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Disciples believe in the divine Sonship of Jesus? Have they not shown the fruit of their obedience to Him as Lord and Saviour? Is their interpretation of Him not the very same? Do they not recognize the Scriptures as the word of God? Has not the Holy Spirit used them? To each of these questions the answer is unhesitatingly in the affirmative. Then the words of the Apostle Peter significantly ring in my ears,

“If then God gave unto them the like gift . . . who was I, that I could withstand God?”¹

The difficulty here is that the peculiarities of these bodies, such as Church governments, forms of worship and in general the way each body does things, have been lifted in the minds of some to equality with the fundamental principles of our faith. Against this I protest, for it cannot be that Church governments, forms of worship, systems of theology, etc., are in the realm of vital Christianity nor can they by any force of logic, historic data or experience be put on a parity with vital Christianity. With our outlook upon the future there is abundant evidence that in the years to come this will be the prevailing position. In common with many others I yield to the liberty of opinion in these matters, but I will not swerve in my conviction that Jesus Christ is the only be-

¹ Acts 11:17.

gotten Son of God and our Lord and Saviour, that in His death and resurrection He has given us the real meaning of life, that His Holy Spirit has the right of way in making our wills channels for the will of God on earth, that we are under obligations as disciples of Jesus to attain unto the unity of the faith for the evangelization of the world and its Christianization in all human relations—social, economic and international—and that the badge of our discipleship is the costly insignia of love. Everything else must be secondary in our outlook on the future. The simplicity and democracy of Jesus have in them elements of such permanent value that neither persecution nor unbrotherly criticism can wither. They must live.

II. The Hebrews were named as stewards of the oracles of God; the Christians were named as stewards of the Spirit of God. The passing from the stewardship of the oracles to the stewardship of the Spirit indicated the abrogation of external authorities in spiritual matters and definitely inaugurated the religion of the Spirit. Nevertheless gradually there grew up the authority of the Church, whose claim to infallibility logically must culminate in an infallible pope even if it took until 1870 to reach it. On the other hand, the infallible Church must be offset by the authority of an infallible Bible, the logical conclusion of which must culminate in an infallible interpretation, which crystallizes in legalism or the authority of the letter of the law. It could not have been the

divine purpose that the Church and the Bible should have been put in opposition to each other; consequently the Roman Catholics abused the first by their own arrogant claims and the Protestants abused the latter by their divisive interpretations, so that in the eyes of the world neither the Church nor the Bible attained to places of infallibility. In this departure the whole Church has suffered—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant, so that it is evident that both the Church and theology have fallen from their fictitious heights. Both the Church and the Bible were to be servants of His religion—not taskmasters. The Gospel of God must not be detached from either the Church or the Bible, but it must be released both from the bondage of the Church and the legalism of the Bible. Jesus Christ came to make men free. His religion is the religion of the Spirit. Because it is the religion of the Spirit He gave those severe words regarding the unpardonableness of transgression against the Spirit. It could not be otherwise. He says,

“Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.”²

² Matt. 12: 31, 32.

These words mark a stern limitation to man's unbridled course. Every kind of sin against God and our fellows may be forgiven through repentance, but the sin against the Spirit is unpardonable, so deadly when committed that there is no desire for repentance, and concerning this sin there need be no prayers offered. Jesus and His disciples partly unveiled it to the human eye, leaving it purposely in vague definitions with its warning wrapped in mysterious isolation and with its weird shadow reaching across the centuries. Discussions of it go back into the early history of the Church, when conflicting sects charged each other with it because of certain creedal declarations, down to these times when some individual drops into despair, believing that he has committed it. Whatever be the opinions it is usually agreed that the warning is addressed to believers, rather than to infidels or flagrant sinners. The Pharisees, whom Jesus warned, were as respectable and devout a community of worshipers then as may be found in any Christian community now, either Roman Catholic or Protestant. It is the cry of alarm. It is the call to avoid the possibility of "an eternal sin."

The vocation of the Spirit is motion and change. We are living in a world of tremendous energy—the floating clouds, the moving sea, the blooming flowers, the growing children—all evince a significant energy. The Scriptures open with the statement that the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters. It was another way of af-

firming the commitment of the world to the laws of motion and change. These are the laws of life because they are the laws of the Spirit. Nature, history, thought, life, experience and religion are continuous. Vegetables and animals have their beginning, their growth, their maturity only to start in again with a beginning and development through growth into maturity. It is the song of every seed as it is dropped into the soil and the first chirp of the bird as it pips its shell for its new world. The changes in nature are challenges to the divided Church to attain unto the unity of the faith, for life implies both continuity and change. Life must either progress by this method, which gives to it charm and beauty, or it must degenerate and decay.

It may be said that physics regards matter solely as the vehicle of energy. Then is there no lesson for us in this? Here is a boy growing to manhood, a colony growing to statehood, a lily flowering, a sand-dune growing. These are four commonplace conditions that deserve observation. All are supernatural in the sense that they are alike expressions of the invisible solidarity of the universe, the imminence of law and the imperishability of energy. "Jehovah is good to all and all His tender mercies are over all His works." Out of the heart of the growing child comes the appeal to attain to unity in the family of God. Out of the history of the growing state, out of the perfumed blossom of the flower, from the desert top

of the sand-dunes there comes one and the same call and that is the awakening from what we are to what we may be in spiritual experience. The temporary arrest of our Godward movement is grief to the Spirit, leaving stunted souls, as seen in the stunted growths of trees and animals, when conditions occurred which arrested their growth. Its permanent arrest produces a deadening condition, which the Spirit life neither here nor hereafter can affect.

The difference between grieving the Spirit and sinning against the Spirit must be observed. Both are sins and we are forbidden to do either, but they differ in character. It is a common experience of the soul to transgress in its attempts to live for God. This transgression is grief to the Spirit. For this grief to the Spirit there is a sense of guilt in the soul and a desire to pray, which is met with abundant mercy. But in the instance of the sin against the Spirit there appears to be no sense of guilt because conscience is dead and consequently there is no place for real prayer. It is a permanently arrested growth of the Spirit's work in the Church, expressing itself in satisfaction with the divided state of the Church with its conceit of party spirit and in the indifference to a change of mind, as illustrated in the fixed, contended Pharisees, to whom Jesus made the remark regarding the sin against the Spirit. The Pharisees were approaching this sin. The words of Jesus were a warning to wake up from their spiritual stupor in order that the

Spirit might move them to the acceptance of more truth, bringing such changes in their lives as would prevent their sinning against the Spirit's function of moving the soul Godward.

A permanently arrested growth leads to the death of conscience. The sin of the fixed is the most disastrous sin in the world. It is strikingly illustrated in the Pharisees and other Jewish denominations' in the time of Christ refusing to change, but instead clinging to their old-time traditions and rejecting the leadership of the Spirit. Its blight lies upon the continent of Asia, where religions have stood boldly in their protests against change. Originally, and still intrinsically, Christianity is the religion of motion and change because it is the religion of the Spirit. As brilliant as were the philosophers and poets of Greece and Rome, it was the Hebrew who first of all discovered the possibilities of man's spiritual future and he therefore stands first among the prophets of the human soul. This was the force of Joel's prophecy and the significance of its emphasis on the day of Pentecost—from a few prophets like Moses, David, Isaiah and others, all might become prophets, themselves penitent and calling others to repentance on their way to the attainment of unity. Jesus said little in denunciation of the sinner; He did better than that; He inspired men to virtue, which marked a revolution in human life. It is the function of the Spirit to release this revolutionary inspiration from the bondage of the letter and tradition into spiritual

freedom, moving constantly and changing in new experiences with God.

The warning of Jesus to the Pharisees is equally applicable to the Church to-day. The Church must move out from where she is and change her policies, else she will certainly go the downward road to the sin against the Spirit and die, leaving an infidel world as the result of her division and unspiritual attitudes. I often wonder why my brothers of the Roman Catholic Church cling so tenaciously to the decrees of ancient councils and my brothers of Protestant Churches to the Scriptural interpretations of long dead leaders, as though infallibility rested upon ancient councils and upon the interpretation of the Scriptures of long years ago. That the councils were made up of good men or that the Scriptural interpretations were made by those of piety and scholarship I do not doubt, but they were in the yesterday. We are living in to-day with preparation for to-morrow. What astronomers linger by the conclusions of Hipparchus or the details of the conclusions of Copernicus? Or what school of medicine is governed by the opinions of Hippocrates or Paracelsus? Has it not been truly said, "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light"? The failure of the Church has been her backward look—her history and her prejudice—necessarily weakening her willingness to follow the leadership of the Spirit.

The whole world is moving to-day as never

before in all history. Every day is crowded with the marvelous. Man is hungering for the satisfaction of the prophetic element in himself as never before. For the Church to refuse the leadership of the Spirit until conscience dies is the sin against the Spirit. Conscience may be trained in the wrong school, but it may be untaught and trained in the right school; it may be defiled, but it can be made holy; it may be wounded, but its wounds can be healed; it may be an evil conscience, but there is a way to make it good; it may be a conscience whose works deserve death, but it can be cleansed; it may be seared as with a hot iron, but it can be healed as human flesh heals when it has been burnt—any one of these conditions or all may come into a single human life and there is a way open for recovery. But when conscience is dead, so that the Christian's moral sense is gone with all its loss of sense of guilt, that is such treason against the Spirit as to make impossible a life here or hereafter. An unwillingness to follow the prophet's lamp for one's spiritual future is the danger; the refusal is death. Penitence, faith, hope, love and freedom are the paths of the Spirit's leading.

The principle of the Gospel of Jesus was transferring religion from the exterior to the interior. The human heart was henceforth the temple. The life of Jesus is the inspiration. The Spirit's function is to communicate to every disciple of Jesus this religious consciousness—"Christ in us

the hope of glory." To say, "I am here, but God is in heaven or at the altar" is opposed to the vital principles of the Gospel of Jesus. Instead it should be, "I am here and by the rule of His Spirit in me, God dwells in me as He dwelt in Jesus when He walked among men." Is this audacity? I think not, for truth never is audacious, but falsehood always is. It is by following the way of falsehood that we violate the consciousness of God in us, arresting all motion and change, thereby approaching the sin against the Spirit. In our outlook there are unmistakable indications of a distinct awakening of the consciousness of the religion of the Spirit and this gives colour to our outlook on the future. Organized Christianity must either give way to this awakened consciousness, or decay in its possessing the form of religion, but denying its power, for the religion of Christ is destined to come to fulfilment because it is life—the life of God in men.

III. Unity must be based upon truth, else it will be neither permanent nor spiritual. In the maze of conflicting opinions the air is filled with echoes of Pilate's interrogation, "What is truth?" In the attempt to find the answer men have resorted to definitions of truth, but the many opposing definitions of the same thing indicate either the unpreparedness of the human mind to make dogmatic definitions in this period regarding unsettled problems, or the unwisdom of that method in its approach toward truth, for the

scholarship and piety of those who have prepared these opposing definitions are above reproach. Consequently we are now dealing with the unpreparedness of conclusions regarding truth, especially when those conclusions involve withdrawing fellowship from those who dissent, and we are likewise dealing with the unwisdom of these methods in approaching truth. The maze in which the whole Church is involved with its multiplicity of divisions proves this. In the outlook we need to counsel our own hearts to avoid haste, as says the Hebrew prophet,

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste.”¹

Is it not true that human impatience has been a large factor in our divisions? As Canon B. H. Streeter in his “Restatement and Reunion” says, “To be in a hurry for truth is the worse way to get to your goal. But this lesson is hard to be learned; man is by nature impatient, especially when vital issues are at stake; and, while the search for truth is going slowly on, there is no truce in the battle with sin, within us or without.”

The restatement of conclusions is of pre-eminent importance. Indeed the most ancient of the creeds—the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed—are repeated with reservation in many in-

¹ Isa. 28: 16.

stances by those who are most loyal to the traditions of history. Yet there is a hesitancy to approach the threshold of either of these creeds with the thought of revising their texts and adjusting them to new interpretations. The Holy Scriptures have been revised from time to time and their revised texts have undergone many new interpretations. Whereas it would be generally acknowledged that the significance of these two most ancient creeds is not to us of this day what it was to those of the fourth century when they were framed. How much more must the same principles apply to the revision and new interpretations of all creeds, which are less in importance than these ancient and venerable documents of the early Church!

Christianity was founded upon neither theology nor philosophy, but upon the fact of Christ. These have contributed to Christianity and will always be handmaids to Christianity, but they belong to the few, while Christianity belongs to the many. It must be frankly admitted that sometimes they have been hindrances instead of helps, but this has been their abuse rather than their rightful service. Christianity is beyond these as the planetary paths are beyond the interpretations of Galileo and Kepler. Before the Roman governor asked the question, "What is truth?" Jesus had said, "I am the truth." It is the man Jesus Christ with Whom we are having personal transactions, if we are having any transactions at all with the Eternal. Our relationship with

Him is based upon the corresponding fact of the new birth in ourselves. I recognize the diversity of interpretations regarding the new birth, but I do not pause here to be entangled in any of these interpretations, other than to say it is putting on the new nature, which is none other than the nature of Christ, giving Himself to do the will of God in His attitude both toward God, His Father, and toward all men, His brothers. It must be recognized that many in the various divisions of Christendom have attained to the new birth, irrespective of any one interpretation of the new birth, if we are to consider at all the evidences of a living faith. It is the fact of the new birth, however, that holds the center of human experience. This fact is beyond all theology, all philosophy, all forms, all ecclesiastical organizations, manifesting itself in what the Apostle Paul calls "the fruit of the Spirit," which is the most costly product in human life. He says,

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law."¹

Frequently these vital elements are pushed aside—sad to say more frequently than otherwise—to discuss systems of theology or to be more definite to discuss Baptism, the Priesthood and the Lord's Supper, over which bitter controversies have been waged. Great divisions now

¹ Gal. 5: 22, 23.

stand as the result of these controversies. We are not only to abandon the controversies, but we are to abolish the divisions. However, in the midst of these conditions many in the various divisions have gone on steadily producing "the fruit of the Spirit," proving by that evidence, which is stronger than logic, that those matters which have been the occasion of severe controversies and causes of divisions belong in the realm of formal Christianity, where the largest freedom is to be given. We have approached Christ usually through Baptism, the Priesthood and the Lord's Supper—all of these or one or more of these. That is to say, membership in any one of the various divisions is usually associated with all of these or some one of these; hence we hear throughout Christendom and in every language on the globe that old cry, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved"; or to be more explicit, "Unless you come to Christ by our way, your salvation will be jeopardized."

Does the outlook make it possible to reverse the order? I mean having received Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour we should recognize as Christians without reservation the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the Protestant and approach Baptism, the Priesthood and the Lord's Supper corporately from within the Church and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, by Whom Jesus promises to guide us to the truth, when He says,

“He (the Spirit) shall guide you into all the truth.”¹

To be met at the threshold with the statement that some of these have not been baptized, or some of these have no priesthood, or some of these can have no Table of the Lord because they have no priesthood, is simply begging the question. These are the very things that have not been decided. The truth about these things is somewhere. We have tried to find that truth working separately from our dogmatic viewpoints and we are still divided. Why not try it by working together in humility and prayer? Have we got that far in Christian experience to face these problems without prejudice and controversy? That they are in the plan of Christianity is generally accepted. The question is, What are their places?

Baptism is a venerable institution, made doubly sacred by Jesus Himself being baptized. But is trine immersion or single immersion apostolic baptism? Is baptism of the penitent believer by immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit the only Scriptural baptism, or is pouring or sprinkling of water on a penitent believer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit equally as Scriptural? Is the baptism of infants according to apostolic precedent or is it post-apostolic in origin? Has baptism a regenerating element or has it anything at all to do with salvation?

¹John 16: 13.

Humanity will always need the priesthood. But is there a priesthood of all believers or is there a special priesthood set apart for sacerdotal service? Is there a Christian priesthood after the model of the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament with its severe restrictions, or can Christians other than priests administer the sacraments? Is the sacerdotal priesthood apostolic or post-apostolic?

The Lord's Supper has ever around it the atmosphere of the Upper Room. But does the bread and wine contain "truly, really and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord" or does "the bread and wine become by consecration really and sacramentally the body and blood of our Lord" or is it a spiritual memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ? In its observance have all Christians a right to it or only those who are members of particular denominations? Is it to be observed weekly, monthly or at other regular or irregular intervals?

And still another question, Is the primitive constitution of the Church to continue without change, or is it to be reconstituted in order to preserve its vitality in its ministry to men?

There are millions of Christians on each side of all these questions. Other millions occupy either middle ground or ground which has not been covered by any of these questions.

There are two methods in finding the solution regarding these matters: One is to separate into

a party all those who agree to a certain interpretation and remain proudly aloof from all others, which is the present condition of the Church and is the best possible way to perpetuate division and therefore the best method not to find the real solution; the other is to come together in a fellowship based upon the fact of the Messiahship and Lordship of Jesus and to prayerfully and humbly work and study corporately, which is the one hopeful method of finding the solution. Consequently it is of primary importance to note that all denominationalism—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and all Protestants—is based upon half-statements. The tragedy of this is intensified by the acceptance of these half-statements for the whole, producing a condition which either expels those from its fold who will not accept the half-statements, or themselves withdraw. We must abandon the position that a thing is settled because a group of a million or a hundred million, for that matter, of devout and scholarly Christians support it, when at the same time we know that there are another million or perhaps a hundred million equally as devout and scholarly dissenting from our interpretation. To withdraw or to be withdrawn from does not settle problems of this character, but instead establishes unscientific and unspiritual methods of procedure. Consequently, however much some of us may dislike to acknowledge it, the fact is that Baptism, the Priesthood and the Lord's Supper cannot be classified at this period in any other than that of

the unsettled problems. Hence for our dogmatism, pride and isolation we must substitute freedom, humility and fellowship if we are to know the will of God for our generation. Until the settlement of these questions there should be coöperation, federation and such coöperative work as will make it possible to help toward a solution.

In our outlook for more satisfactory conclusions we must seek corporately for the truth, re-discovering for ourselves our liberties and our fellowship with the saints of all ages, as well as the discovery of new paths, under the lamp of the Spirit of God and in the light of all new knowledge. One wearies in this present day maze of confusion, longing for altitudes from which he may see more clearly the approaches to truth. Many Christians in looking upon Christians in other communions are like a man traveling in foggy weather. Those at a distance on every side appear to be wrapped in the fog, while near him the atmosphere appears clear, although he is as much in the fog as any that he sees around him. The most difficult task in our approach to truth is the discovery of our own errors, for truth is not apart from personal life—a fact that needs to be written in letters of gold. This is the force of Christ's statement when He says, "I am the truth." The ideal of Christian life is itself becoming the truth, referred to by the Apostle Paul in these words, "For me to live is Christ," that is to say, for me to live is to reproduce Christ. Transcendent heights! Yet not

beyond the possibilities of the weakest and humblest of us all. Truth is only expressed and revealed as we develop spiritually. Consequently truth is in the realm of the spiritual and it can only be discovered by the spiritual eye.

The adjustment of all spiritual problems lies in the future and whatever truth they contain will be discovered only under the guidance of the Spirit, but to assume a dogmatic position on an unsettled problem, to pose in superiority over other Christians and to practice aloofness with other Christians, is the one sure way not to find the truth. Such a spirit is so unspiritual that whatever of truth it may possess becomes poisoned by the attitude of untruth. To say that the privileges of the Church and the fellowship of Jesus are for me and not for you so closely approaches infidelity that for my part I had rather deny that Jesus is the Christ than to believe that He is the Christ for my party, but not in the same sense for the other parties of Christendom. Under the poison of a sectarian policy it is no surprise that a divided Church faces an infidel world.

However, there are millions of believers scattered among all communions and our outlook has in it the promise of a love that "suffereth long and is kind," that "envieth not," that "vaunteth not itself," that "is not puffed up," that "doth not behave itself unseemly," that "seeketh not its own," that "is not provoked," that "taketh not account of evil," and that "re-

joiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth." Rapid changes toward unity must crowd the future, else increasing tragedies, wider in scope and more brutal in character, will predominate on the earth. In the fulfilment of God's promises all Christians must feel the divine impulse, from the pope in the Vatican to the deacon in the North Carolina mountain Church of Primitive Baptists. Some Gregory will come to the papacy, some Hooker or Andrewes will come to the Anglicans and some new voices like Calixtus or Baxter or Campbell will be heard among Protestants. Conferences will succeed controversies, prayer will succeed dogma and there will be multitudes of ventures toward unity in search for the paths of truth, which is only another way of saying that many will trust God's leadership more and man's decrees and anathemas less. There must be ventures of faith in the living God regarding the unity of His Church, as distinct as the Apostle Paul's experiences in his break with conservative Judaism and going out beyond where others hesitated to go. It was the way of living truth then and it is no less the way of the same living truth now. As says Dr. James Cooper of the Church of Scotland,

"Peace must come through the truth—the truth as it is in Jesus, stated, apprehended, grasped with intense realization of the duties it imposes."

Facing the facts of the divided Church with its serious complications along with the urgent need

of interchurch fellowship, as well as approaching the sin against the Holy Spirit and likewise standing in the daybreak of the prophetic dawn of new discoveries of truth, we must be concerned because it is the concern of Christ. These things cannot be pushed easily aside and every man continue to go his own way without jeopardizing the faith of the Church and the honour of Christ. There remains to be said that there are seven things which every Christian can do and ought to do to brighten the outlook for Christian unity and hasten its consummation. These are:

(1) Praying, earnest praying in public and in private, remembering that in the high-priestly prayer of Jesus He says,

“Holy Father . . . I pray . . . that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.”¹

(2) Thinking, definite thinking in the terms of brotherhood of all Christians, remembering Jesus says,

“One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren.”²

(3) Speaking, kindly speaking of those Christians in other communions than your own with a real interest in their welfare, remembering that the Apostle Paul says,

“Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.”³

¹ John 17: 21.

² Matt. 23: 8.

³ Phil. 2: 4.

(4) Conferring, frankly conferring with those of other communions whenever it is possible, always in the spirit of courteous friendship, and avoiding the dangers attending controversial methods, which belong under the admonition of the Apostle Paul, when he says,

“Shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.”¹

(5) Teaching, patiently teaching the principles of Christian brotherhood and the unity of the Church in circles, in classes, in schools and wherever there is the opportunity, by text-books, lectures, literature, conferences, etc., with earnestness and intelligence, so that there may be a free intercommunication of the ideas of Christian unity the world over, destroying the menace of ignorance and of denominational prejudice, producing correct ideas of brotherhood among all Christians and increasing popular understanding of these principles that make for peace in the House of Christ, remembering that He says,

“The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.”²

(6) Working, heartily working together, especially those communions of nearest kinship, entering into definite negotiations looking toward their

¹ Titus 3: 9-11.

² John 14: 26.

formal *rapprochement* and ultimate union, remembering that the Apostle Paul says,

“We are God’s fellow-workers: ye (the whole divided Corinthian Church) are God’s husbandry, God’s building.”¹

(7) Believing, sincerely believing that the prayer and purpose of Jesus will find their fulfilment in a united Christendom and indeed they are being fulfilled now, remembering that Jesus says,

“All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”²

This path is not an untrodden highway. There are many in the various communions walking it and each additional brother who enrolls himself in the quest for the unity of the Church of God brightens the outlook and brings us nearer to the consummation of the prayer and purpose of Jesus Christ in His ministry among men.

Every Christian must examine his own heart and face the task with the joy of the new consciousness of brotherhood. Unity must be found first. Its basis must be religious rather than theological. Plans of coöperation and systems of theology will follow. The Church is the Body of Christ and all Christians are brothers. Says the Rev. T. A. Lacey in his “Unity and Schism,”

“It is because they are brothers that heresy and schism are sins. We are, in point of fact, one divided family, and the first step toward reconciliation is the acknowledgment of brotherhood. That means repent-

¹ 1 Cor. 3:9.

² Mark 11:24.

ence. We need not look curiously into the origins of schism; that is the way to self-exculpation. We are not called to the easy and pleasant but unprofitable task of lamenting the sins of our fathers, and building the tombs of the prophets whom they slew. We are called to repent of our own sins; not of one another's sins, but of our own; the sins by which we have perpetuated discord. And repentance means renunciation. We are not to cast away things tried and proved, in a vain hope of mutual accommodation; but there are sacrifices to be made before those things are approached. A sacrifice should be the giving of something that we value, something of cost. And it must be offered, not in hope of gain—for then it is no sacrifice—but as an act of love. We must listen to the cry, albeit raised by discordant voices, 'Sirs, ye are brethren!'"

The fact of brotherhood must become as permanently established in human thought as the fact of Christ. As upon the two great commandments rest the law and the prophets, likewise upon these two great facts rests the salvation of the world. The future is rich with the promises of God and the spiritual possibilities of mankind. An infidel world is the price we are paying for a divided Church. The time is at hand when the honour of Christ and the salvation of a world must rise above our pride of party and contentment of divisions in obedience to the will of God on earth. Sectarianism must be abolished. Henceforth let no man glory in his denomination; that is sectarianism: but let all men glory in Christ and practice brotherhood with men; that is Christianity.

Appendix

I

THE CALL FOR A WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

At the General Convention of 1910 of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, held in Cincinnati, the following report was presented to the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies on October 19, 1910:

The Joint Committee to which was referred the following resolution offered in the House of Deputies by the Rev. W. T. Manning, D. D., of New York:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that a joint committee, consisting of seven bishops, seven presbyters and seven laymen, be appointed to take under advisement the promotion by this Church of a conference following the general method of the World Missionary Conference, to be participated in by representatives of all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ, and that said committee, if it deem such a conference feasible, shall report to this Convention;

have considered the same, and submit the following report, and recommend the immediate consideration and passage of the resolution appended to the report.

"Your committee is of one mind. We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be willing to come together for the consideration of questions of Faith and Order. We believe, further, that all Christian communions are in accord with us in our desire to lay aside self-will, and to put on the mind which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We would heed this call of the Spirit of God in all lowliness, and with singleness of purpose. We would place ourselves by the side of our fellow Christians, looking not only on our own things, but also on the things of others, convinced that our one hope of mutual understanding is in taking personal counsel together in the spirit of love and forbearance. It is our conviction that such a conference for the purpose of study and discussion, without power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, is the next step toward unity.

"With grief for our aloofness in the past, and for other faults of pride and self-sufficiency, which make for schism; with loyalty to the truth as we see it, and with respect for the convictions of those who differ from us; holding the belief that the beginnings of unity are to be found in the clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as of those things in which we are at one, we respectfully submit the following resolution:

"*Whereas*, there is to-day among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfilment of Our Lord's prayer that all His disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent Him:

"*Resolved*, the House of Bishops concurring, that a joint commission be appointed to bring about a conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a conference. The Commission shall consist of seven bishops, appointed by the chairman of the House of Bishops, and seven presbyters and

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seven laymen, appointed by the president of the House of Deputies, and shall have power to add to its number and to fill any vacancies occurring before the next General Convention:

GEORGE W. PETERKIN
BOYD VINCENT
THOMAS F. GAILOR
WILLIAM LAWRENCE
CHARLES P. ANDERSON
REGINALD H. WELLER
CHARLES H. BRENT
WILLIAM T. MANNING
ALEXANDER MANN
BEVERLY E. WARNER
JOHN E. SULGER

CHARLES N. LATHROP
WILLIAM M. CLARK
B. TALBOT ROGERS
ROBERT H. GARDINER
GEORGE WHARTON PEPPER
BURTON MANSFIELD
EDWARD P. BAILEY
FRANCIS L. STETSON
H. D. W. ENGLISH
W. A. ROBINSON

Joint Committee."

On October 19, 1910, the above resolution was adopted unanimously by both the House of Bishops and the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, and the Joint Commission appointed.

The officers of the Commission are:

President

Rt. Rev. CHARLES P. ANDERSON, D. D., Bishop of
Chicago, 1612 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Chairman of Executive Committee

Rev. WILLIAM T. MANNING, D. D.,
27 West 25th Street, New York, N. Y.

Treasurer

GEORGE ZABRISKIE, D. C. L.,
49 Wall Street, New York, N. Y.

Secretary

ROBERT H. GARDINER,
174 Water Street, Gardiner, Maine.

II

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF
CHRISTIAN UNITY, INC.

GROWING out of a wide-spread desire for Christian unity, the Disciples of Christ at their General Convention at Topeka, Kansas, in October, 1910, revived the "Christian Association," which was an organization started in 1809 by Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, and later developed into what is now the communion known as "Disciples of Christ." The new organization, which was started on the same day that the Protestant Episcopalians appointed in their General Convention, October 19, 1910, in Cincinnati, Ohio, their Commission on a World Conference on Faith and Order, took the name "Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity," with headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Association recognizes all Christians as members of the Body of Christ—Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestants and all others who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Its purpose is to watch for every indication of Christian unity and hasten the time by (1) intercessory prayer, not only on the part of its members, but by organizing leagues of prayer; (2) friendly conferences, and it has held many very satisfactory conferences with the leaders of various communions in America and in Europe; and (3) distribution of irenic literature, and it has distributed hundreds of thousands of pages of Christian unity literature, written by leaders in the various communions of Christendom. The Association aims to be a depository for all kinds of Christian unity literature.

There are four commissions in the Association: Commission on Christian Unity, dealing with Christian unity in general; Commission on a World Conference on Faith and Order; Commission on Federation; and Commission on International Friendship. To all these

subjects the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity has spoken.

Condition of membership in the Association is sympathy with the work of Christian unity, expressed in prayer and coöperation, and the payment of an annual membership fee of not less than \$5.00.

PETER AINSLIE, *President.*

H. C. ARMSTRONG, *Secretary,*
Seminary House, Baltimore, Md.

III

THE SECOND INTERIM REPORT OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE

Second Interim Report of a sub-committee appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York's committee and by representatives of the English Free Church's commissions, in connection with the proposed World Conference on Faith and Order.

A MOVEMENT has been initiated in America by the Protestant Episcopal Church, which has been widely taken up by the Christian Churches in the United States, to prepare for a world-wide conference on Faith and Order with the view of promoting the visible unity of the Body of Christ on earth. In response to an appeal from those who are coöperating in America a committee was appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and commissions by the Free Churches to promote the same movement in England.

This joint conference has already issued a First Interim Report prepared by a joint sub-committee, consisting of:—(1) A statement of agreement on matters of Faith; (2) A statement of agreement on matters relating to Order; (3) A statement of differences in relation to matters of Order which require further study and discussion.

In further pursuit of the main purpose the sub-committee was reappointed and enlarged. After mature

and prolonged consideration it is hereby issuing its Second Interim Report under the direction of the conference as a whole, but on the understanding that the members of the sub-committee alone are to be held responsible for the substance of the document.

* * *

In issuing our Second Interim Report we desire to prevent possible misconceptions regarding our intentions. We are engaged, not in formulating any basis of reunion for Christendom, but in preparing for the consideration of such a basis at the projected Conference on Faith and Order. We are exploring the ground in order to discover the ways of approach to the questions to be considered that seem most promising and hopeful. In our first report we were not attempting to draw up a creed for subscription, but desired to affirm our agreement upon certain foundation truths as the basis of a spiritual and rational creed and life for all mankind in Christ Jesus the Lord. It was a matter of profound gratitude to God that we found ourselves so far in agreement. No less grateful were we that even as regards matters relating to Order we were able to hold certain common convictions, though in regard to these we were forced to recognize differences of interpretation. We felt deeply, however, that we could not let the matter rest there; but that we must in conference seek to understand one another better, in order to discover if even on the questions on which we seemed to differ most we might not come nearer to one another.

1. In all our discussions we were guided by two convictions from which we could not escape, and would not, even if we could.

It is the purpose of our Lord that believers in Him should be one visible society, and this unity is essential to the purpose of Christ for His Church and for its effective witness and work in the world. The conflict among Christian nations has brought home to us with a greater poignancy the disastrous results of the divisions which prevail among Christians, inasmuch as they have hindered that growth of mutual understanding

which it should be the function of the Church to foster, and because a Church which is itself divided cannot speak effectively to a divided world.

The visible unity of believers which answers to our Lord's purpose must have its source and sanction, not in any human arrangements, but in the will of the One Father, manifested in the Son, and effected through the operation of the Spirit; and it must express and maintain the fellowship of His people with one another in Him. Thus the visible unity of the Body of Christ is not adequately expressed in the coöperation of the Christian Churches for moral influence and social service, though such coöperation might with great advantage be carried much further than it is at present; it could only be fully realized through community of worship, faith and order, including common participation in the Lord's Supper. This would be quite compatible with a rich diversity in life and worship.

2. In suggesting the conditions under which this visible unity might be realized we desire to set aside for the present the abstract discussion of the origin of the episcopate historically, or its authority doctrinally; and to secure for that discussion when it comes, as it must come, at the Conference, an atmosphere congenial not to controversy, but to agreement. This can be done only by facing the actual situation in order to discover if any practical proposals could be made that would bring the episcopal and non-episcopal communions nearer to one another. Further, the proposals are offered not as a basis for immediate action, but for the sympathetic and generous consideration of all the Churches.

The first fact which we agree to acknowledge is that the position of episcopacy in the greater part of Christendom as the recognized organ of the unity and continuity of the Church is such that the members of the episcopal Churches ought not to be expected to abandon it in assenting to any basis of reunion.

The second fact which we agree to acknowledge is that there are a number of Christian Churches not

accepting the episcopal order which have been used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world, converting sinners, and perfecting saints. They came into being, through reaction from grave abuses in the Church at the time of their origin, and were led in response to fresh apprehensions of divine truth to give expression to certain types of Christian experience, aspiration and fellowship, and to secure rights of the Christian people which had been neglected or denied. In view of these two facts, if the visible unity so much desired within the Church and so necessary for the testimony and influence of the Church in the world is ever to be realized, it is imperative that the episcopal and non-episcopal communions shall approach one another not by the method of human compromise, but in correspondence with God's own way of reconciling differences in Christ Jesus. What we desire to see is not grudging concession, but a willing acceptance for the common enrichment of the united Church of the wealth distinctive of each.

Looking as frankly and as widely as possible at the whole situation, we desire with a due sense of responsibility to submit for the serious consideration of all the parts of a divided Christendom what seem to us the necessary conditions of any possibility of reunion:

1. That continuity with the historic episcopate should be effectively preserved.

2. That in order that the rights and responsibilities of the whole Christian community in the government of the Church may be adequately recognized, the episcopate should reassume a constitutional form, both as regards the method of the election of the bishop as by clergy and people, and the method of government after election. It is perhaps necessary that we should call to mind that such was the primitive ideal and practise of episcopacy and it so remains in many episcopal communions to-day.

3. That acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character should be all that is asked for. We think that this may be the more easily

taken for granted as the acceptance of any such theory is not now required of ministers of the Church of England. It would no doubt be necessary before any arrangement for corporate reunion could be made to discuss the exact functions which it may be agreed to recognize as belonging to the episcopate, but we think this can be left to the future.

The acceptance of episcopacy on these terms should not involve any Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, but should enable all to maintain the continuity of their witness and influence as heirs and trustees of types of Christian thought, life and order, not only of value to themselves but of value to the Church as a whole. Accordingly we hope and desire that each of these communions would bring its own distinctive contribution, not only to the common life of the Church, but also to its methods of organization, and that all that is true in the experience and testimony of the uniting communions would be conserved to the Church. Within such a recovered unity we should agree in claiming that the legitimate freedom of prophetic ministry should be carefully preserved; and in anticipating that many customs and institutions which have been developed in separate communities may be preserved within the larger unity of which they have come to form a part.

We have carefully avoided any discussion of the merits of any polity, or any advocacy of one form in preference to another. All we have attempted is to show how reunion might be brought about, the conditions of the existing Churches and the convictions held regarding these questions by their members being what they are. As we are persuaded that it is on these lines and these alone that the subject can be approached with any prospect of any measure of agreement, we do earnestly ask the members of the Churches to which we belong to examine carefully our conclusions and the facts on which they are based, and to give them all the weight that they deserve.

In putting forward these proposals we do so because

it must be felt by all good-hearted Christians as an intolerable burden to find themselves permanently separated in respect of religious worship and communion from those in whose characters and lives they recognize the surest evidences of the indwelling Spirit; and because, as becomes increasingly evident, it is only as a body, praying, taking counsel, and acting together, that the Church can hope to appeal to men as the Body of Christ, that is Christ's visible organ and instrument in the world, in which the Spirit of brotherhood and of love as wide as humanity finds effective expression.

(Signed)

G. W. BATH: & WELL:

(*Chairman*).

E. WINTON:

C. OXON:

W. T. DAVISON.

A. E. GARVIE.

H. L. GOUDGE.

J. SCOTT LIDGETT.

W. B. SELBIE.

J. H. SHAKESPEARE.

EUGENE STOCK.

WILLIAM TEMPLE.

TISSINGTON TATLOW (*Hon. Sec.*).

H. G. WOOD.

March, 1918.

IV

THE CALL FOR A CONFERENCE ON ORGANIC UNION OF THE EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT BODIES IN AMERICA BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

THE Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., in common with other evangelical communions, has felt an increasing desire for a closer union of the Christian bodies of America. This desire has been greatly augmented since the outbreak of the world war which is drawing our people together along all lines of their

life, and was given definite expression by the action of the 130th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., at Columbus, Ohio, 1918, which recorded the "profound conviction that the time has come for organic union of the evangelical Churches of America," and provided "that this Assembly hereby overtures the national bodies of the evangelical communions of America to meet with our representatives for the purpose of formulating a plan of organic union."

In taking this action the purpose of the Presbyterian Church is simply to invite her brethren in Christ to meet and counsel together with a view to finding a way by which we may outwardly and concretely express that spiritual union which we believe already exists among the people of Christ.

Our Church is further moved to this step by her sense of the new and heavy responsibilities now resting on us all, and which must grow heavier in the new day coming to the world as the result of the great war, responsibilities which we feel cannot be adequately met in our separate capacities, but which we are persuaded can be effectively carried by a union of existing forces. Such a consummation would present to mankind a united witness of our common faith and also equip and perfect the Church for the maximum of service to her Lord and the world for which He died.

WM. H. ROBERTS,
*Chairman Committee on Church
 Coöperation and Union.*

*Witherspoon Building,
 Philadelphia, Pa.*

A preliminary conference composed of the representatives of seventeen churches met in Philadelphia and on December 5, 1918, took the following action:

1. That the members of this Conference from each communion, whether present in official or personal capacity, be asked as soon as possible to appoint representatives on an *ad interim* committee to carry forward the movement toward organic union here initiated.
2. The committee shall be composed of one member

from each communion, and one additional member for each 500,000 communicants, or major fraction thereof. In addition, the Foreign Missions Conference and the Home Missions Council shall each be asked to name one member.

3. The same privilege of membership on the committee shall be extended to evangelical denominations not represented here.

4. The members of the committee appointed by the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. are asked to act as the nucleus and convener of the *ad interim* committee.

5. This *ad interim* committee shall be charged with the following duties:

(a) To develop and use at its discretion, agencies and methods for discovering and creating interest in the subject of organic union throughout the Churches of the country.

(b) To make provision for presenting by personal delegations, or otherwise, to the national bodies of all the evangelical communions of the United States, urgent invitations to participate in an interdenominational council on organic union.

(c) To lay before the bodies thus approached the steps necessary for the holding of such council, including the plan and basis of representation, and the date of the Council which shall be as early as possible, and in any event, not later than 1920.

(d) To prepare for presentation to such council when it shall assemble a suggested plan or plans of organic union.

(e) To consider and report upon any legal matters related to the plan or plans of union which it may propose.

6. In addition to the above, the *ad interim* committee is directed to report to the interdenominational council on any and all matters within the field of its inquiries. The committee will be subject to the jurisdiction of the Council.

In requesting the *ad interim* committee to undertake the arduous task outlined, the conference desires the

committee to proceed with freedom at every point. As of possible assistance, however, in the deliberations, the conference expresses its present judgment as to certain aspects of the problem to be faced.

1. The conference is profoundly solicitous that the effort for organic union shall have first regard to those forces of vital spiritual life which alone give meaning to our effort. No mechanical uniformity must be sought, nor any form of organization which ignores or thwarts the free movement of the Spirit of God, in the hearts of His servants.

2. In line with this desire the conference hopes the committee will be able to devise plans so broad and flexible as to make place for all the evangelical Churches of the land, whatever their outlook of tradition, temperament or taste, whatever their relationships racially or historically.

3. The conference regards with deep interest and warm approbation all the movements of our time toward closer coöperative relations between communions, especially the notable service rendered by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. While the *ad interim* committee's aim and function will lie in a field entirely different from those movements, it will be expected to maintain sympathetic relations with them, and to regard with satisfaction any reinforcement which its activities may bring to them.

4. The notice of the committee is directed to the efforts for organic union represented in other lands, especially the Churches of Canada. The remarkable and significant statement recently issued by a joint committee of Anglican and Free Churches of Great Britain will also call for the study of the committee.

5. The conference calls attention to the fact that in its search for a plan of organic union, the committee will not be precluded from considering plans of federal union such as are in varying forms present to the minds of members of this conference. Our nation is a federal union, but is not the less an organic union. Care should be used not to confuse the term "federal" as thus em-

ployed, with this meaning when used to signify "associated" or "coöperative."

6. Last of all, the conference declares its hope and longing, that the evangelical Churches may give themselves with a new faith and ardour to the proclamation of the gospel of Christ, which is the only hope of our stricken world, and to all those ministries of Christian love and leading for the community, the nation and the nations, by which they shall reveal to men the mind of Christ and hasten the coming of His kingdom.

Attest:—

WM. H. ROBERTS,
Chairman Business Committee.

HUBERT C. HERRING,
Secretary Business Committee.

V

PROPOSED ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

MEMORANDUM

Presented by

The Most Rev. the Archbishop of Uppsala to the International Committee of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches at The Hague, October 2nd, 1919.

THE need of witnessing to the unity of all true believers around the Cross of Christ was felt in many quarters during the war.

A declaration was issued to this effect already in November, 1914, by representatives of the Church in neutral countries, i. e. by the Federal Council in the U. S. A. and by representatives of the Church in Denmark, Holland, Norway, Switzerland and Sweden; further, by two bishops in belligerent countries, i. e. by the Archbishop of Finland and by Bishop Ferenez, Transylvania. Late in the summer of 1917 the bishops of Seeland, Denmark and Christiania, Norway, and myself from Sweden, issued an invitation to an ecumenical

conference. Our invitation was favourably received by Christians and representative bodies in different Churches and countries on both sides belonging to the evangelical part of the Catholic Church and to the orthodox part of the Catholic Church. As to the great third part of that Church, the Roman part, sympathies were expressed strongly by the Archbishop of Warsaw in the name of the whole episcopate in Poland. Cardinal Gasparri wrote on behalf of the pope.

Delegates were appointed by religious authorities in Hungary, in Germany, in Great Britain, by the Holy Synods in Constantinople and Athens, and churchmen from other countries, e. g. America, expected to come. However, as several difficulties, especially in obtaining passports, made a really representative gathering from both sides impossible, we held an international conference in December, 1917, in Uppsala, with representatives from five neutral countries only. Its general statements on international brotherhood, state and social life have found acceptance in different quarters of the Church. Our invitation was reiterated twice for two different epochs in the year 1918, but it was not possible to have an ecumenical meeting during the war. All our correspondents, religious bodies as well as individual churchmen, have been absolutely unanimous as to the necessity of an ecumenical conference after peace.

Meanwhile, quite independently of our action, efforts had been made for such a gathering of believers. Thus, in Great Britain in 1917 the British Council for promoting an international Christian meeting was founded, and opened an energetic activity. An ecumenical conference was also proposed by the British branch of our World Alliance, by the important parts of the Church in Hungary, and from Switzerland.

Already in 1916 the Federal Council in U. S. A. started action in the same direction. Now that Federal Council has proposed a really official ecumenical conference for next year. Thus it seems to be evident that Christendom in the north of Europe, the Federal Council and leading men in Great Britain and on the

continent are unanimous in desiring a gathering, as ecumenical as possible, during next year or at the epoch that will prove advisable.

Now a few words (1) on the character of such a gathering, (2) on the comprehensiveness of it, and (3) on the place where it might be held.

1. Our task is not to bring organizations together, but to unite hearts and minds and endeavours. True believers and followers of Christ have always been a minority even in the Christian communions, and they will ever remain a minority. But it is essential to use for Christian aims all communions of the Church, and all Christian organizations to which it is our privilege to belong.

Our ecumenical conference has to be clearly distinguished from the great task that is called the World Conference on Faith and Order. The commission sent to Europe for that World Conference quite agreed with us in that respect. Our conference may be a most important preparation for the World Conference on Faith and Order, but it will not deal with Faith nor Order, but some well-defined urgent practical aims.

Union for such purposes does not require unity in Faith and Order. I remind you of the doctrine in the Augsburg Confession and the Thirty-nine Articles in that respect. Dr. Carroll renders the same doctrine in his *Primer on Church Unity*, answer 49. Uniformity is not necessary for common preaching and striving in actual needs of mankind. The Report of the Archbishop's Fifth Questionnaire says (page 2): "We say deliberately that in the region of moral or social questions we desire all Christians to begin at once to act together as if they were one body in one visible fellowship. This could be done by all alike without any injury to theological principles."

I have tried to define the chief objects of the ecumenical conference in an article which appeared some weeks ago in *The Contemporary Review*, London. They seem to me to be: (A) Common doctrine and endeavour for international Christian brotherhood and organized

unity of nations; (B) Christian principles and action for social renewal of society; further (C) a common voice must be created for the Christian conscience. I advocate an ecumenical council representing Christendom in a spiritual way.

2. As to the comprehensiveness of this proposed gathering, good reasons speak for beginning with evangelical Christendom only, in order to create a common platform for our part of the Catholic Church before inviting the Orthodox and Roman divisions of the Church.

But there are also good reasons and warm sympathies for forming the scope as comprehensive as possible at once.

3. As to the place of the conference my brethren in Copenhagen and Christiania and myself who form since November, 1914, a committee on Christian unity, have reiterated our invitation to one of the Scandinavian countries.

“CHRISTIANIA, COPENHAGEN, UPPSALA,
8th September, 1919.

“A deep sense of the responsibility and of the possibilities for the Christian Church in the present crisis of our civilization forced us more than two years ago to invite the various sections of the Church of Christ and leading churchmen in different countries to an international Christian conference, in order to strengthen by prayer and mutual understanding the conviction of unity among all believers in Christ in testifying that the Cross of Christ is the uniting force that transcends all earthly divisions.

“The task of that conference should also be that of taking up those complicated questions that have arisen concerning international Christian fellowship, the social and economical renewal, the value of lawful order, and other heavy duties of our Christendom which have been more or less neglected, and in regard to which there ought to be common doctrine and preaching, and a common indefatigable endeavour amongst all believers and in all sections of the Church.

"Our undertaking was received with sympathy by different groups of the Church in belligerent countries as well as in our neutral parts of the world. It is especially noteworthy that in England, quite irrespective of our initiative, activities from various directions were set in motion to promote such a conference.

"Various difficulties prevented the conference from meeting in its intended form, and we preferred to confine ourselves to a conference of neutrals, instead of having a conference without a fair and full representation of Christendom from both of the then belligerent parties.

"The conference, which met at Uppsala in December, 1917, made considerable contributions to the aims of an ecumenical gathering, which it is one of our chief duties now to prepare and organize. We, servants of the Church in the three Scandinavian countries, hereby beg to invite an ecumenical conference to meet in one of our countries, in Uppsala, Christiania, or Copenhagen, or another place in Scandinavia, during the following year, possibly in the latter part of the summer.

"We understand that our fellow-Christians in the Scandinavian countries would consider it a great privilege to receive such a gathering, and that our proposed conference will not in any part of the world be supported with warmer, wider and deeper sympathy and with more ardent intercession than in Scandinavia, where the need of such a manifestation of the unity of the Church and of preparation for the duties imperiously imposed by the time, has been alive and strong during those apocalyptic years.

"In mutual service for Christ, we remain,

"Yours faithfully,

"H. OSTENFELD,
Bishop of Seeland, Denmark.

"JENS TANDBERG,
Bishop of Christiania, Norway.

"NATHAN SÖDERBLOM,
Archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden."

PROPOSED ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

Resolution passed by the International Committee of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches at its meeting at The Hague on October 2nd, 1919.

That the International Committee of the World Alliance desires to express its deep sympathy with the proposal for an ecumenical conference of the different Christian communions to consider urgent practical tasks before the Church at this time, and the possibilities of coöperation in testimony and action.

The committee expresses the conviction that such a conference, if it can be arranged, will prove an inestimable blessing to mankind.

That this resolution be referred to each national council with the request that it be communicated to the Churches in their respective countries.

NATHAN SÖDERBLOM.

 VI

TOURING IN THE INTEREST OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

(An Editorial from The Christian Union Quarterly, October, 1919, and included here as one of the methods in awakening interest in Christian unity.)

THE editor of this journal made a tour during a part of May and all of June from the Atlantic coast to the middle west of the United States, speaking and holding conferences in fourteen places. Christian unity cannot come by agreements on the part of a few leaders around a conference table. Such conferences help, but Christian unity must be taken to the people. The purpose of this

tour was not so much to convey information regarding the Christian union movement, as it was to find at first hand the mind of the Church regarding this great issue.

The plan was to meet in an informal conference a group of ministers and laymen to the number of forty to sixty, including all communions in the city, then in the afternoon of that day or the next day to meet a group of women representing all communions. In most instances a public meeting was held in the evening, and on Sunday sometimes the whole day was given to Christian unity, as was done in Lexington, Ky., under the direction of the Rt. Rev. Lewis W. Burton, bishop of that diocese. In that instance there was a Christian unity service in the First Methodist Church at eleven o'clock, a union service of all the Churches of Lexington in Christ Episcopal Cathedral at four o'clock, and a Christian unity service at the First Presbyterian Church at eight o'clock. In some cities an Episcopalian had charge of all arrangements, in others, Disciples, Congregationalists, etc. Rev. E. L. Goodwin, editor of *The Southern Churchman*, and Rev. H. D. C. MacLachlan were chairmen for Richmond; Rt. Rev. Lewis W. Burton and Rev. I. J. Spencer, for Lexington; Rev. A. B. Philputt, for Indianapolis; Rev. Edgar DeWitt Jones, for Bloomington; Rev. F. W. Rothenburger, for Springfield; Rev. Mr. Armstrong, secretary of the City Federation, for St. Louis; Rev. R. B. Briney, for Carthage, Mo.; Hon. H. M. Beardsley, a Congregationalist, for Kansas City; Rev. M. Lee Sorey, for Lawrence, Kansas; Rev. W. A. Shullenberger, for Des Moines; Rev. A. M. Haggard, for Boone, Ia.; Rev. C. C. Morrison, editor of *The Christian Century*, for Chicago; Rev. R. W. Woodroffe, of the Episcopal Church, and Rev. J. H. Goldner, for Cleveland, etc.

In most instances at the noon hour a luncheon for fifty to a hundred was provided, and in other instances a public dinner in the evening for several hundred. Especially was this so in Chicago under the direction of Rev. C. C. Morrison. Mr. Robert H. Gardiner, Gardiner, Maine, secretary of the Commission on the

World Conference on Faith and Order, was with me in Baltimore and Richmond and Rev. F. W. Burnham, Cincinnati, Ohio, president of the American Christian Missionary Society, was with me in Springfield and St. Louis. Both of these rendered valuable service.

I sought to speak in behalf of three outstanding movements for organic union. I named them in order: first the Episcopal movement—the World Conference on Faith and Order—always emphasizing that fine twofold question of this conference—What does your communion hold in common with all Christendom and what does it hold as a special trust that differentiates it from all other bodies and therefore justifies its separate existence? The second is the Presbyterian movement—the Council on Organic Union, which met last December in Philadelphia, the *ad interim* committee of which is now at work on a plan for the union of all evangelical Protestants. This conference will meet again in the winter. After that the plan will be presented to the Protestant bodies for definite action. Whether the plan now worked out or another be adopted is secondary, only the evangelical Protestants must get together, first, loosely bound without interference with their denominational machinery, but to forthwith grow into a harmonious force for united action. The third movement is that of the Disciples—the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Baltimore—which emphasizes local conferences among all religious bodies, intercessory prayer, for there can be no unity without the atmosphere of prayer, and the distribution of irenic literature. The only office in the world where all kinds of Christian unity literature of irenic character under the authorship of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics can be obtained is in that office. They send out 25,000 pieces of Christian unity mail a year and to all parts of the world.

These three movements supplement each other. The Episcopal movement is for the union of the whole Church, the Presbyterian movement for the union of

evangelical Protestants, and the Disciple movement helping both by their local conferences, leagues of intercessory prayer and distributing irenic literature in that interest.

This was doubtless the first tour of its kind ever made in this country. I delivered sixty addresses. The interest surpassed my expectations. There were always many questions asked and in turn questions were freely answered. There is a genuine desire for Christian unity which cannot be smothered by reactionary efforts. The inquiry in many instances was "What can we do?" Leagues for conferences, prayer and research must be organized all over the country. The whole Church is making the discovery that divisions are unspiritual, unwise and unnecessary. A divided Church can never produce the best spiritual results, and its attempts to win the world in many instances rival the escapades of Don Quixote rather than that fundamental unity which characterized the life of the Founder of Christianity.

The distribution of literature has its function, but the message of a united Church must be carried by individuals. In the instance of the Prohibition movement for many years America had to be evangelized in that interest before the abolition of the saloon. It is no less so regarding the unity of the Church. There are both opposition and indifference. These can be removed and must be. Teams must go out until the whole nation has been awakened. This awakening must not be on an emotional basis, else it will quickly subside. There must be literature, well written and well printed. Classes must be organized for this work as in the temperance cause and missionary endeavour. City, district, state and national conferences must become permanent institutions. It is the greatest task before the Church and calls now for the best men and women in the various communions. It will require large sums of money, but when men and women of large means become more interested in Christ and a lost world than in their denominational peculiarities the money will come, for a united Church is of God, preëminently, distinctly and

eternally. Although great difficulties face us, the outlook is radiant with hope.

While statesmen are planning for a league of nations, as long years ago our forebears planned for a league of independent states that made this union of the United States of America, it is high time that the whole Church should rally her forces for such a league of united action, that not only the League of Nations may be maintained, but that the new world may be upon better foundations for permanent peace and social betterment than it was in 1914. This is no choice of ours; it is a necessity, for an unbelieving and wrecked world is the price we are paying for our divisions.

VII

ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY, Inc. Having its inception in the work of Thomas Campbell, 1809, present organization 1910, President, Rev. Peter Ainslie; Secretary, Rev. H. C. Armstrong, Seminary House, Baltimore, Md., U. S. A. For intercessory prayer, friendly conferences and distribution of irenic literature, "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith." Pentecost Sunday is the day named for special prayers for and sermons on Christian unity in all Churches.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE UNITY OF CHRISTENDOM, 1857, President, Athelstan Riley, Esq., 2 Kensington Court, London; Secretary in the United States, Rev. Calbraith Bourn Perry, Cambridge, N. Y. For intercessory prayer for the reunion of the Roman Catholic, Greek and Anglican communions.

CHRISTIAN UNITY ASSOCIATION OF SCOTLAND, 1903, Secretary, Rev. Robert W. Weir, Edinburgh. For maintaining, fostering and expressing the consciousness of the underlying unity that is shared by many members of the different Churches in Scotland.

CHRISTIAN UNITY FOUNDATION, 1910, Secretary, Rev. W. C. Emhardt, Newtown, Berks Co., Pa. For the promotion of Christian unity throughout the world by research and conference.

CHURCHMEN'S UNION, 1896, President, Prof. Percy Gardner; Hon. Secretary, Rev. C. Moxon, 3 St. George's Square, London S. W., England. For cultivation of friendly relations between the Church of England and all other Christian bodies.

COMMISSION ON THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER, 1910, President, Rt. Rev. Charles P. Anderson; Secretary, Robert H. Gardiner, Esq., Gardiner, Me., U. S. A. For a world conference of all Christians relative to the unity of Christendom.

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VIII

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